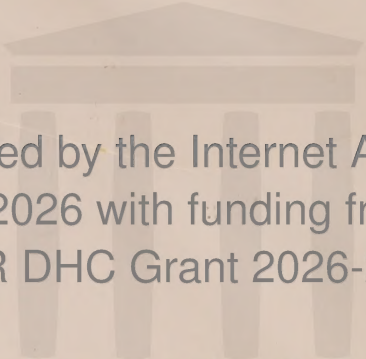


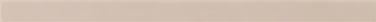
WOMEN'S
THEOLOGICAL
CENTER

400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
CLIR DHC Grant 2026-2028

<https://archive.org/details/2174.06.14>





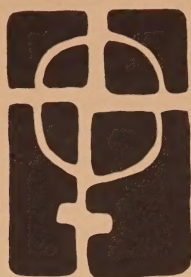
WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER
400 THE FENWAY
BOSTON, MA 02115

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 58625

Rev. Marge Ragona
Metropolitan Comm. Church
131 Cambridge St.
Boston, MA 02114



RED SUN PRESS



WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER

Fall 1983

An Occasional Newsletter

Vol 1 No.2

STUDY/ACTION PROGRAM BEGINS...



Dear Friends,

This September marks a milestone in the progress of the Women's Theological Center. As many as fifteen women--from the Boston area and as far away as Hawaii and Washington state--will gather on the Fenway with the Center's Co-Directors and faculty to inaugurate the first Full-Year Study/Action Program. The Coordinating Committee will also be on hand September 12 to welcome the women who are making this part of the dream a flesh and blood reality.

Throughout the dreaming, conspiring and sheer hard labor involved in collectively bringing to birth the WTC, the Coordinating Committee has always been cognizant that some *one*, some *bodies*, would test our resolve; would examine our theory; would see if we were actually about the business we say that we are; would challenge the vision that has been five years in the becoming. And now those challengers and co-conspirators are here! We are all eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of our expectations.

Those of you who have been involved in collective efforts know the perils of trying to bring such visions to life. From the beginning the Coordinating Committee has been a theologically, philosophically, socially, culturally diverse group of impassioned women, a fact that has contributed to the difficulty and the rewards of the collective process. We soon learned that in order to struggle for a space where other women might be free to challenge debilitating stereotypes and to gain insight and strength from shared oppression and shared activism, we had to begin to create such a space for ourselves. Our struggle together has made us stronger, and from that strength comes the power to welcome the women who join us this September in investing their energy, resources, intellects and spirits in the next stage of the journey that is the Women's Theological Center.

We thought you'd like a sense of some of the women who will be among the participants in the Women's Theological Center's first Full-Year Study/Action Program. We are tremendously excited about this gathering of women and want to introduce a few of them to you...in their own words...

CHENG IMM TAN -- I am a Chinese Malaysian from Penang, Malaysia. As of September, I would have been in the U.S. for 5 years. I come from a very traditional, and conservative



(617) 277-1330

Women's Theological Center 400 The Fenway Boston MA 02115

Chinese family who are practicing Buddhists. They sent me to a Catholic school for 13 years and I was much influenced by Catholicism. At Harvard Divinity School I was disillusioned by the sexism and dualism in orthodox Christian Theology and am looking forward to a more holistic theology and spirituality. For me, striving to be a whole woman within a fragmented world, in relationship to other people and to the world, is a religious journey.

CELESTE DEROCHE -- At ten someone told me it wasn't important for a girl to get as good an education as a boy. I asked why and was told that I would never have to provide for anyone and that I would of course get married and be taken care of. I vowed never "to be taken care of." At thirteen I asked why my little sister had no hat, no mittens, no boots in the middle of winter in Maine. No one could even attempt an answer. At 17 I was standing in a soup line in one of the richest cities in the U.S., waiting with some 1300 people to be fed. No one even acknowledged my why. At 22 I worked with NETWORK and was lobbying in Washington for a mutual bilateral verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons. I was called naive, unrealistic, an emotional female because I asked for an end to a policy that is leading us to complete destruction and that is already killing people. The why was ignored. I come to WTC to join you in the why, to claim our power, to celebrate that and to learn how to sustain myself--ourselves--as we continue to struggle--to empower.

ANN WATSON -- The first word I ever said was a very emphatic "No." Now at 24 years of age I am learning the importance of being able to say that word. After two years at Candler School of Theology I am learning to say "no" to my limited experience as the daughter of a South Georgia United Methodist minister; to a language which no longer communicates my faith, and to roles and expectations which stifle my own creativity. In coming to Boston, I am "leaving home" in many different ways for the first time. I am looking forward to growing as we share our gifts together.

MAUD DUPONT BLASS -- I was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, daughter of a shoemaker and a housewife. I received my educational training at several schools in Haiti. I worked for a total of ten years in two cities of Haiti as a youth worker and organizer and then came to the United States. I am married and the mother of twins. Since in Boston, I have been active in the Boston school system as a volunteer and a staff member and at St. Matthew's Church. Presently, I have been studying at Roxbury Community College, majoring in Bilingual Studies.

You'll be hearing lots more about the participants in this year's program in upcoming newsletters. In addition to the student participants there is a group of women who are joining the WTC this fall in the role of seminar leaders. They, too, bring great and varied gifts for which we are most grateful. Shawn Copeland and Francine Cardman will be co-leading the Feminist Theology and Theory Seminar. Shawn is a graduate student at Boston College, currently completing her dissertation in the field of Systematic Theology. Francine is Associate

We are delighted to announce that the WTC has received a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy, which will partially fund the "Wellsprings of Power" program series (calendar enclosed). We are grateful to Clarissa Atkinson and Carol Green for calling the Foundation to our attention, to Staff member Charles Bickford for his assistance in preparing our proposal, and to the Foundation itself.

The Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy is a program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It makes grants to support public education projects which bring the learning of the humanities to bear on current controversial issues for the benefit of the citizens of Massachusetts. Individuals or groups interested in obtaining a grant may contact the Foundation's office at 237 Whitmore at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst (413) 545-1936.

Professor of Historical Theology at Weston School of Theology. Adele Smith-Penniman, our new Co-Director, and Linda Clark will be co-leading the seminar of Feminist Spirituality and Praxis. Linda is Associate Professor of Liturgy and Music at Boston University School of Theology. Adele is ordained in the Unitarian Universalist Church and is a graduate of the Harvard Divinity School. Her background is in psychology and counselling. Nancy Richardson will continue as Co-Director, and will lead the Field-Based Critical Action Seminar.

*SPECIAL THANKS TO
CHERYL AND JENNIFER*

Words of thanks are in order for Cheryl Giles, Co-Director, and Jennifer Kerby, Office Manager, who are leaving their positions with the Center. Cheryl has worked especially hard in the area of recruitment, and we will miss her leadership and her ability to articulate the goals of the WTC with passion, sensitivity, courage and integrity to a wide variety of interested persons. We look forward, however, to her continued service on the Board of Directors and the Coordinating Committee. Jennifer has managed the office with energy, efficiency, imagination and good humor. She leaves now for new ventures in women's communities in California, and time off from her M.Div. studies. We are left with the difficult job of holding off chaos as we try to fill her position.

A Journey in Feminist Spirituality

Drawing on the resources of personal stories and struggles to name, celebrate and create from our own experience, women from a variety of backgrounds and present convictions joined together this past spring to explore some of the dimensions of feminist spirituality in a discussion group sponsored by the WTC. Facilitated by Nancy Hughes, a member of the Coordinating Committee, the group raised fundamental questions about the sources and meaning of women's spirituality: is my spiritual life outside my thinking and bodily self? what parts of my spirituality have evolved from my familial and religious traditions? is it possible to locate my spirituality outside the rubrics of traditionalism, especially of the ecclesiastical and hierarchical sort? Nancy Hughes offers the following observations on a significant aspect of the group's reflections--the discussion of Alice Walker's novel, The Color Purple, and Audre Lorde's biomythography, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name.

As a black woman who cares deeply about my (our) literary tradition, I was eager to explore the ways that each book might serve as a starting point and catalyst in our discussion of feminist spirituality. Although each writer is unique in her assemblage of themes which connect and speak deeply to our experiences, what we were able to see through the eyes of Walker and her characters Celie and Shug, what we were able to glimpse in the growing life of Lorde was: the ways in which women survive the victimization and violation by those who love us, who fear us and work toward our destruction. What we were further able to glimpse were the ways in which women strive to come to terms with meaning, purpose and responsibility in our lives.

The story of emergence in the face of powerlessness (e.g., the relationship between Celie and Shug) is our story. Our story is discovering a sense of autonomy through our ongoing re-



*"Well, us talk and talk
about God, but I'm still
adrift. Trying to chase
that old white man out
of my head. I been so
busy thinking bout him
I never truly notice
nothing God make. Not
a blade of corn (how it
do that?) not the color
purple (where it come
from?). Not the little
wildflowers. Nothing."*

*Alice Walker
The Color Purple*

Women's religious congregations have been among the earliest and strongest supporters of the Center. Their contributions have made it possible for us to begin the Resource Center's programs in 1982-83 and to continue the planning and development of the Study/Action Program.

Emmanuel College and the Episcopal Divinity School have contributed office and meeting space, offered invaluable assistance, and made it possible for the participants in the Study/Action Program to receive academic credit.

Women United in Theology and Action and the United Methodist Board of Ordained Ministry have helped us in offering scholarships; the Association of Theological Schools has made a grant for curriculum development.

to us. Audre Lorde and Alice Walker are part of a long tradition of black women writers (see the collections Black-Eyed Susans and Midnight Birds, edited by Mary Helen Washington) who have taken on the difficult task of helping us to discover who we are and to remember that "we both know that we are trying, all the time, to extend the possibilities of truth between us" (Adrienne Rich).

THE RESOURCE CENTER presented a number of well-received events this past spring, including the March "Sisters in the Spirit" concert, an exhilarating evening of jazz and blues by Boston-area women artists, co-sponsored with the Poor People's United Fund. In April we joined with Boston College's Intercultural Awareness Forum in sponsoring a lecture by Angela Davis. Ms. Davis continues to be a fierce witness to and "agitating" commentator on global events, especially those which most crucially affect the lives of women and the struggles of the disenfranchised. Throughout the spring we have continued to celebrate our monthly liturgies together with a growing community of women from all parts of the city. This intimate faith seeking and sharing has helped create the energy to transform the pains and struggles of our lives into individual and shared power.

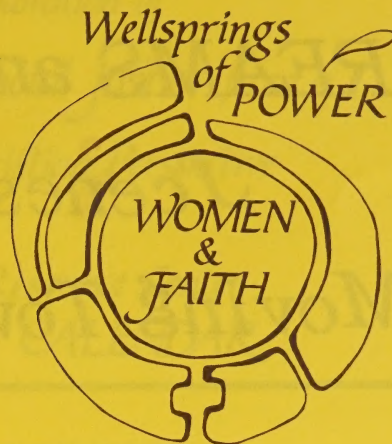
OUR THANKS TO YOU! From all across the country you have responded to our first newsletter with letters, gifts and words of encouragement. To the growing network of persons committed to nurturing the Women's Theological Center, our deepest thanks!

The WTC continues to need your donations and support to ensure its ongoing programs this year and to lay a foundation for the years ahead. Your gifts, services and contacts can help us meet our needs, both large and small. Among the most immediate of these are: salary for a full-time office manager (\$10,000); salary for a faculty member (\$5000); one full scholarship (\$3000); a "Selectric" typewriter (\$850); airfare for a recruitment trip (\$500); graphics supplies (\$250).

Your contributions will help the WTC go forward. WE NEED YOUR HELP!! A RETURN ENVELOPE IS ENCLOSED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE. Our thanks, once again, to each of you!

MOVING MOUNTAINS;

A Faith That Confronts



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1ST 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Morning: MOVING MOUNTAINS: WOMEN'S WORK, WOMEN'S FAITH

Dr. Mary Helen Washington, Professor & Writer

Rev. Barbara Gerlach, Minister & Artist

Ms. Kip Tiernan, Urban Minister & Community Organizer

Afternoon: WOMANSPIRIT--STRENGTH SURVIVING STRUGGLE--VISIONS OF HOPE

Ms. Beverly Smith, Writer & Film Historian;

specializing in films on the lives of black women.

Evening: Scenes from "MOVING TOWARD THE SUN" **7:00 PM**

An abridged one act version of the play by Brenda Walcott depicting the struggle of a black woman's search for healing.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2ND 1:00 - 5:00 PM

1:00 pm: IMAGE BREAKING/IMAGE BUILDING: A RITUAL WORKSHOP

Rev. Joan Martin, Minister

Dr. Linda Clark, Professor & Musician

4:00 pm: WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

ALL PROGRAMS HELD AT ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

625 Huntington Avenue, Boston

While there will be registration at the door, your pre-registration will help us greatly. Fees for the conference are on a sliding scale from \$5 to \$25 depending on your means.

Name: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Address: _____



**WOMEN'S
THEOLOGICAL
CENTER**

400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115
Telephone: (617) 277-1330



**massachusetts foundation
for humanities & public policy**

DREAMS and HEALING ...



Scenes from

"Moving Toward the Sun"

written by Brenda Walcott

This winning drama in the New England Black Playwright Competition concerns itself with being Black, female, and American. In "Dreams" the protagonist, Dora, is a successful poet and teacher who is trying to come to grips with her creativity, her femaleness, and her passionate need for love and nurturance as she approaches her 40th year. Her story of isolation, fear, and alienation is overcome and celebrated in "Healing", which attempts to probe those inner resources that are available to us all.

Mass. College of Art Theatre
625 Huntington Ave.

Admission \$3.00

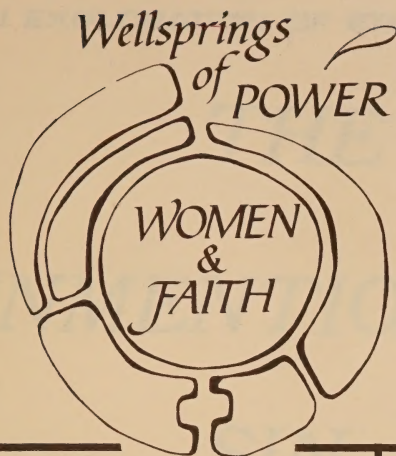


Saturday, October 1
7:00pm

Sponsored by

THE WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER

THE MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION
HUMANITIES AND PUBLIC POLICY



An Exploration of Ethics & Social Justice from a Feminist Christian Perspective

WTC Resource Center 1983-84 CALENDAR

OCTOBER 1 & 2, 1983

SATURDAY 9:30 AM
2:00 PM
7:00 PM
SUNDAY 1:00 PM
4:00 PM

MOVING MOUNTAINS: A FAITH THAT CONFRONTS

Women's Work, Women's Faith
Womanspirit--Strength Surviving Struggle--Visions of Hope
'MOVING TOWARD THE SUN' drama by Brenda Walcott
Image Breaking/Image Building

WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

KENNEDY BUILDING, ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, BOSTON

Follow-up neighborhood seminars will occur throughout the fall. Keep watch for further details, dates and locations in the upcoming WTC newsletters.

OCTOBER 24

MONDAY 7:30 PM

THE UNMENTIONABLE SIN

WASHBURN CONF. ROOM, EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE

NOVEMBER 6

SUNDAY 4:00 PM

WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED

DECEMBER 4

SUNDAY 1:00 PM
4:00 PM

THE PATHOLOGY OF HOMELESSNESS

HARRIET TUBMAN HOUSE, COLUMBUS AVE, BOSTON
WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

FEBRUARY 1, 1984

WEDNESDAY 7:30 PM

MAKING HISTORY: WOMEN'S STORIES/WOMEN'S LIVES

ST. FRANCES DE SALES SCHOOL, RAYNOR CIRCLE, ROXBURY

FEBRUARY 5

SUNDAY 4:00 PM

WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER, 400 THE FENWAY, BOSTON

MARCH 3

SATURDAY 9:30-3:30
4:00 PM

IMAGES OF GOD: MYTH AND CREATIVITY

PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED
WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

APRIL 1

SUNDAY 4:00 PM

WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER, 400 THE FENWAY, BOSTON

APRIL 26

THURSDAY 7:30 PM

FAMILIES AND THE DYNAMICS OF SEXUALITY

WASHBURN CONF. ROOM, EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE

MAY 6

SUNDAY 4:00 PM

WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

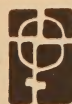
WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER, 400 THE FENWAY, BOSTON

JUNE 3

SUNDAY 4:00 PM

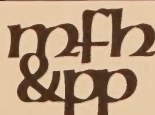
WOMANSPIRIT CELEBRATION

WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER, 400 THE FENWAY, BOSTON



WOMEN'S
THEOLOGICAL
CENTER

400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115
Telephone: (617) 277-1330



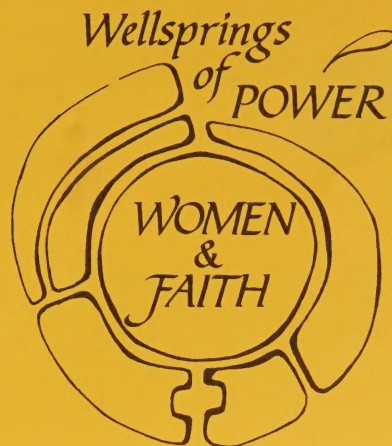
massachusetts foundation
for humanities & public policy

237 Whitmore Administration Building University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA 01003 (413) 545-1936

AN EXPLORATION OF ETHICS & SOCIAL JUSTICE FROM A FEMINIST

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

THE UNMENTIONABLE SIN



SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MARIE FORTUNE

MARYVIOLET BURNS

ELIZABETH BETTENHAUSEN

CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF
SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Seattle, Washington

B.U. SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24

7:30 pm

EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

99 Brattle, Cambridge



WOMEN'S
THEOLOGICAL
CENTER

400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115
Telephone: (617) 277-1330



massachusetts foundation
for humanities & public policy

237 Whitmore Administration Building University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA 01003 (413) 545-1936

God Has No Sexual Preference

An Open Letter on Homosexuality

Nancy A. Hardesty, Ph.D.

Gal. 3:28

Press

Books by Nancy Hardesty

GREAT WOMEN OF FAITH
(Baker 1980, Abingdon 1982)

ALL WE'RE MEANT TO BE
A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO WOMEN'S LIBERATION
with Letha Scanzoni
(Word Books 8th Printing 1982)

Additional copies of this letter are available from:

Evangelicals Concerned*
Room 803
30 East 60th Street
New York, New York 10022

Evangelical Outreach Ministries (EOM)*
P.O. Box 7882
Atlanta, Georgia 30357

GALATIANS 3:28 PRESS
P.O. Box 14126
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87191

*Evangelical Christians, gay and straight, devoted to developing a biblical understanding of and support for lesbians and gay men.

This letter is distributed free by **GALATIANS 3:28 PRESS**, publisher of the newsletter **PERSPECTIVE** and seller of books promoting religious human equality.

For a copy of the current newsletter and catalog send \$2.00.

Galatians 3:28 Press
Pamela J. Hughes, editor
P.O. Box 14126
Albuquerque, N.M. 87191
(505) 299-0217

ality amid lists of sins. In these last two passages the meaning of the words is widely disputed. Scholars who have worked in the materials of the ancient world for decades still are not sure exactly **what** the words refer to, so just to say they call "homosexuality" sin is gross misrepresentation. But even if they do indeed refer to certain practices by some homosexuals, the lists also contain condemnations of certain practices by some heterosexuals, and lots of other sins practiced by many people of whatever sexual orientation. **Nowhere** in Scripture is there **any** shred of support for saying that "homosexuality" *per se* or any particular homosexual practice is any **more** sinful than, say, lying, stealing, or even coveting, which all made the Ten Commandments.

Just like money or food or authority, sexuality can be very good, can be used to heal and empower people, to bring the earth more nearly in conformity to heaven, or it can be used to destroy and dominate people, to make the earth hell.

GOD LOVES US

Well, that is about it — much longer than I expected, considering that the Bible actually says so little about homosexual practices and nothing about sexual orientation! But the Bible does have a lot to say about God's love for us. For me, the main point of the Bible, of the Christian faith, is that no matter how many times or in how many myriad ways we lose our way, hurt ourselves or others, turn our backs on God even, God loves us and stays with us, forever offering forgiveness, healing, and wholeness. We live, and move, and have our being — including our sexual being — within the sphere of God's love.

With love,
Nancy

Send Book Orders to:

Gal. 3:28

Press

GALATIANS 3:28 PRESS

* Pamela J. Hughes, Editor
P. O. Box 14126

Albuquerque, NM 87191-0126

Please Print:

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Comments:

Dear Friend:

You ask how I deal with homosexuality and the Bible. I would like to share that with you this way.

The bottom line — the top line — is that God **loves** people, all persons. That to me is the basic message of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, of Judeo-Christian history. As the Psalmist says over and over, "God's love is everlasting," or as John says, "God is Love!"

SEXUALITY IS GOOD

God loves us because God **created** us. And God created us in God's own image. To be human is to reflect something of God's nature. Sexuality is part of that creation — **not** heterosexuality, but **sexuality**, the delightful ability to respond to another person in physical ecstasy. And God said, "It is good!"

The Genesis stories about Adam and Eve are intended, I believe, to make perhaps several points, but I do not believe they are meant to make heterosexual marriage mandatory, as some would argue. Too much in Scripture contradicts that.

Their basic point is to deny sexism and racism — to show that the human race is one family created from the hand of God initially as one unit, one flesh. From the one came two — "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh." In the beginning there was perfect equality and harmony.

Procreation is, of course, one component of sexuality, but I do not read the Bible as giving that component precedence or using Adam and Eve to "prove" its importance. In an age when contraception was unknown and when children to increase the tribe were important, one would logically expect more emphasis on procreation than one finds.

The recreational, communicational, and unitive functions of sexuality are also evident in the Bible. Sexuality and sexual activity are accepted as natural, joyous, fulfilling, good. (Celibacy, I believe, is an option not based on a **denial** of sexuality, but on a choice to be sexually inactive. It may be a good choice in certain circumstances, but it is not advocated by the Bible as any more "holy." Denial

of sexuality is a component of later Greek philosophy and **not** biblical Christianity.) The more central meaning of sexuality in Scripture is a very intimate, deep form of communication, a form of overcoming separateness and becoming one. Sexual union is a way of transcending otherness, and thus is a model, a paradigm, of our spiritual oneness with God.

THE WHOLE BIBLE IS OURS

It is only against such a background that one should talk about homosexuality in the Bible because the subject really comes up **very** rarely in Scripture. As with "the woman issue," people like to cite a couple of verses "on the subject" as though that were all the Bible had to say to a whole class of people. But the **whole** Bible belongs to **every** person.

And the Bible knows nothing about the contemporary scientific concept of sexual orientation. To say that is not to denigrate Scripture any more than it would to say that Scripture knows nothing about laser medicine or computer microchips. It is simply a fact. To read contemporary issues back into the Bible is to do it an injustice. The goal is to understand most clearly what the Bible says **on its own terms**.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

The story most often cited to "prove" God's "condemnation" of homosexuality is the Sodom and Gomorrah story in Genesis 19. Now if one reads the context (chapter 18), it is clear that God had judged and condemned those cities long before the incident with the angels anyway. But if one asks how the rest of the Bible explains the story, it is clearly not a sexual issue. Ezekiel 16:49 says, "They never helped the poor and needy." Jesus in Luke 10:10-13 says that their sin was lack of hospitality. Wisdom 19:13-14 says the same.

The other Old Testament references are Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: "You must not lie with a man as with a woman." (Incidentally, almost all of these injunctions in the "Holiness Code" are addressed to men and not to women. The only one addressed to women prohibits intercourse with

animals!) I would make two points concerning these references: (1) Since all the prohibitions appear addressed to heterosexual married men, for them to take other men as sexual partners a) could be simply adulterous, b) could be involved with idolatrous temple worship since we know it was practiced in that time, or c) could be exploitive or disrespectful of the other person (anal intercourse was used in the ancient world as a way of degrading conquered armies and slaves). (2) The other point which must be made to those who would hoist these verses on a banner for their crusade is that if one insists on applying this literally today, **one must** then consistently adopt the **rest** of Leviticus. One cannot just claim that these two tiny verses are eternal truth and all the rest is culturally relative. Married couples should not have intercourse during menstruation; we should all practice animal sacrifice; a man cannot marry a woman and then her sister; any man who has a discharge from his body must be quarantined for at least eight days; we must eat only kosher animals, etc., etc. Let the one who has never eaten a shrimp, lobster, scallop, clam, or oyster throw the first stone.

ROMANS 1

The more difficult passage is, of course, Romans 1:26-27. Again one must note the context. It is not a discussion of sexuality but of sin and idolatry. Idolatry is worship of anything or anyone other than God. Sin is also turning away from God in ways which deny who God is and deny the humanity of other people. Again the reference here is to "unnatural" sexual practices — heterosexuals turning away from perhaps already established relationships into adulterous or idolatrous ones, exploiting, using others. The passage says nothing about sexuality in the context of loving, committed relationships between homosexual people whose basic orientation makes relating to their own gender "natural."

Seen in the context of what follows in Romans 1:28-32, this reference is similar to the remaining two (I Corinthians 6:9-10 and I Timothy 1:9-10) where some people find references to homosexu-

ORDER FORM

Books by Nancy Hardisty: GREAT WOMEN OF FAITH ALL WERE MEANT TO BE Books about homosexuality: IS THE HOMOSEXUAL MY NEIGHBOR NOW THAT YOU KNOW (For Parents) AND THEY FELT NO SHAME Christians Reclaim Their Sexuality (has a chapter "Gay By God")	\$2.95 \$5.95 \$6.95 \$6.95 \$11.95	Quantity	Amount	 ☐ Visa  ☐ MasterCard
GALATIANS 3:28 PRESS CATALOG (One free with book order) God Has No Sexual Preference (Postage donations appreciated)	\$2.00 Free	Card #	Exp. date	Signature
SUBTOTAL			4.25% NM G.R. Tax (if applicable) AMOUNT ENCLOSED	

POSTAGE & HANDLING (\$1.50/first item, .50/ea. add. item)

WOMEN, MEN AND THE BIBLE IS THE HOMOSEXUAL MY NEIGHBOR? SPEECH, SILENCE, ACTION! BIBLICAL IMAGERY OF GOD AS FEMALE VIEW FROM THE INTERSECTION	Quantity	Amount	
		\$4.95	
		\$6.95	
		\$8.95	
		\$10.95	
		(Watch for this one fall 1983)	
GALATIANS 3:28 PRESS CATALOG (One free with book order)		\$2.00	
Biblical Theme of Male-Female Equality (A contribution of 10¢ each for quantities greater than 10 will assure future printings.)	1-10	Free	
POSTAGE & HANDLING (\$1.50/first item, .50/ea. add. item)			
		SUBTOTAL	

JESUS' FEMINIST BEHAVIOR

Leonard Swidler's *Women in Judaism* (1976) and Sarah Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves* (1975) demonstrate that the status of women in the first century was dreadfully low. For instance, because all women were assumed to be nymphomaniacs, women were kept secluded in their homes, often being locked inside when their husbands went out. Yet Jesus habitually traveled with women (Luke 8:1-3).

Talking with a woman — even his own wife — was considered degrading to men, especially in public. Yet Jesus talked freely with the Samaritan woman (John 4) and with other women who asked for help. And although women were considered too frivolous and untrustworthy to be witnesses in a court of law, Jesus commissioned women to be the first witnesses of the resurrection. The more we learn about sexism in Jesus' time, the more we realize that Jesus really was a feminist (that is, a believer in human equality).

THE EARLY CHURCH

From Acts 2 we learn that when certain Jews thought those who were speaking in tongues were drunkards, Peter explained that the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29 was being fulfilled. Since Joel said that both males and females would prophecy (preach), Peter was announcing that in the Christian church the Spirit of God would grant special gifts to God's people regardless of their sex.

We know from I Corinthians 11 that women did indeed pray and preach. We also know from I Corinthians 14 and from 1 Timothy 2 that conditions in certain local congregations led Paul to counsel women to learn in silence. We cannot be certain about what was happening in those congregations, but we *do* know from many other Biblical passages that Paul did not mean to say that women may *never* speak or have authority or take leadership roles in the church.

For example, in Romans 16 Paul sends his greetings to Phoebe, "a fellow-Christian who holds office in the congregation." He tells the Roman Christians to assist her in any way possible because she is a *prostatis*, a "presider over" the church. He speaks of Priscilla and her husband Aquilla as his "fellow-workers in Christ"; and he speaks of a woman named Junia as being "eminent among the apostles."

THE PRINCIPLE OF
MUTUAL SUBMISSION

In order to keep the central focus on evangelism, the apostles had to accommodate somewhat to social conditions. So they told Christian slaves to be submissive to their masters and Christian wives to be submissive to their husbands. But they introduced the concept of full human personhood and mutual submission which (if obeyed) would have done away with slavery and male supremacy within one generation.

Ephesians 5:21 says "Be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ." If Christian slave masters had subjected themselves to their slaves and if Christian husbands had subjected themselves to their wives out of reverence to Christ, obviously there would have been no more slavery or male supremacy among Christians. To emphasize mutuality, Paul instructed husbands to give themselves up for their wives as Christ gave Christ's self up for the church, and to love their wives as they loved their own (male) bodies.

When Paul speaks of the husband as the head of the wife, the context indicates that he is speaking in terms of *source*. He apparently means that the submissive self-giving of the husband will be the source of the harmonious and grateful submission of the wife. Hence, mutual submission.

ONENESS IN THE SPIRIT

Within the Biblical doctrine of the church as the One Body of Christ, there is no different treatment of males and females. *All* are referred to as the sons of God; *all* are referred to as the Bride of Christ. *All* are instructed to give birth to the offspring of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). *All* are told to develop the spiritual gifts bestowed by the Spirit without regard for race or economic class (I Corinthians 12:13) or age or sex (Acts 2:16-18).

We are *all* in God and God is in *us all* (I John 5:20; Romans 8:9-11). God in a woman should not be subordinated to God in a man, or vice versa, except in the fluid, voluntary, and individualized submission to an authority *earned* by the responsible use of spiritual gifts. Each of us, male or female, will sometimes lead and sometimes follow, always seeking the guidance of a God who plays no favorites.

Books by Virginia Mollenkott:
Women, Men and the Bible
(Abingdon, 1977)

Is the Homosexual My Neighbor
with Letha Scanzoni
(Harper & Row, 1978)

Speech, Silence, Action!
The Cycle of Faith
(Abingdon, 1980)

The Divine Feminine
Biblical Imagery of God as Female
(Crossroad, Feb. 1983)

Views From the Intersection
with Catherine Barry
(Crossroad, coming later 1983)

This pamphlet is distributed by **GALATIANS 3:28 PRESS**, publisher of the newsletter **PERSPECTIVE** and seller of books promoting religious male-female equality.

For a copy of the current newsletter and catalog send \$2.00.

Galatians 3:28 Press
Pamela J. Hughes, editor
P.O. Box 14126
Albuquerque, N.M. 87191
(505) 299-0217

What kind of mail will you receive?

Depending upon what interest area you selected, you will be hearing from any or all of the following:

- Women's literary, art, scholarly, and political magazines and journals
- Women's publishing houses, announcing new feminist books
- Producers and distributors of women's music
- Political groups doing significant work on progressive feminist issues
- Announcements of spiritual retreats
- Non-traditional worker's organizations, networks and publications
- National women's studies programs
- Tours for women, including wilderness expeditions and tropical paradises
- AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

Look for the initials "NWML" on your mailing labels to know what is coming to you as a result of your participation in this network.

Registration Cost: This is an unfunded grassroots project which depends upon donations from the women who participate in the network. A donation of \$3.50 will pay for the costs associated with processing your registration form. If you cannot afford to donate, please fill out and return the registration form anyway. It is crucial that all women participate in a network that serves women's needs.

The Moral Majority can mail to over 5 million of their supporters. Feminists, too, must have this capability. Donations of \$10-\$25 will help pay for the urgently needed publicity to enable the network to reach its target of 100,000 participants by the end of 1984, and to continue growing to 1 million.

Mail this completed form (with your donation) to:

National Women's Mailing List
1195 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 824-6800



National Women's Mailing List

From the grassroots a mighty feminist network is growing!

Sign up if you would like to receive mail in any of the interest areas listed on this registration form. Women's organizations will then be able to mail to you to keep you informed about feminist events, actions, publications, and services.

By filling out the registration form, you alone determine what kind of organization and/or individuals can mail to you. You will only receive mailings in those areas you have designated. Your wishes will be absolutely respected. No person's name will ever be entered into the data bank without her voluntary registration. At any time you can have your name removed from the list, however it's doubtful that you will want to. The mail you get as a participant in the network is feminist mail from women's organizations that you probably would not otherwise receive.

A partial listing of the kinds of mail being sent out to members of the network is on the back of this registration form...





NATIONAL WOMEN'S MAILING LIST

INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION FORM

Women's Organizations: Write for an organizational registration form to be part of the resource lists.

- **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:** We are asking for this information so that we can know who we are reaching. This will help us know where our efforts need to be focused so that we can create a truly broad-based national service that connects with all women. *You do not have to disclose this information to register.* Put your choice of one letter in each box.

E Age

- A Under 18
B 18-21
C 22-29
D 30-39
E 40-54
F 55-64
G 65 and over

R Parent

- A Yes
B No

NAME MARGARET P BROWN
ADDRESS 7112 UNDERWOOD AVE APT 52C
CITY PENSACOLA STATE FL ZIP 32504

E Cultural Identity
(Choose ONE)

- A Black
B Asian/Pacific
C Native American
D Latina
E White
F Jewish
G Other

EH Occupational Field Choose 2 categories you most identify with

- A Health/Medical
H Mental Health/Counseling
B Legal
C Teaching/Librarian/Educational
R Scientific/Technical
S Social Services
3 Research
6 Management/Administration
T Computer
K Homemaker

- I Financial (banking, accounting)
- E Office Worker
- D Factory/Industrial Worker
- F Farm/Agricultural Worker
- G Skilled Trades (carpentry, plumbing)
- 9 Unskilled Worker
- 4 Sales
- J Business Owner
- L Services (restaurant, haircutting, etc.)
- 5 Spiritual/Religious

- N Performing Arts
O Graphic Arts Fine Arts
P Artisan Crafts
7 Writer Poet Playwright
Q Media (newspaper, tv, film, etc.)
V Political Worker (organizer networker)
W Military
X Government Worker
M Other Professional _____
Z Other (specify) _____
U Student
8 Retired

MAIL CODES

- **SELECTIONS:** You may choose as many interest areas as you like by entering the appropriate selection letter in the boxes by the subject headings. *Only one letter may be entered in each box!* If you are interested in receiving mailings in more than one category within a section, you must enter the letter designating "all of the above." In the future we hope to be able to expand our capability to allow for many detailed and specific selections. For now, however, related categories have to be grouped together.

A Who Are You?

- A. Woman (individual registrant)
B. Women-only Organization
C. Organization with mixed membership/staff (women and men)
D. Man (individual registrant)

B Who can mail to you?

- A Individual women and women's organizations (no men)
B Everyone
C Women's Organizations only (no individuals)
D Women's & mixed organizations (no individuals)

A Political Candidates

- A Yes, I will allow access by political candidates
B No, do not permit political candidates to mail to me

7 Women's Culture

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| A Music | F Crafts | K Painting & Photography |
| B Film Video | G Prose Writing | L Spirituality |
| C Dance | H Photography | M Women's Presses |
| D Theatre | I Poetry | Z All of the above |
| E Painting Drawing | J Dance and theater | |

7 Sports

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| A Basketball | F Gymnastics | J Title IX |
| B Softball | G Volleyball | K Running |
| C Tennis | H Backpacking Canoeing | L Weightlifting |
| D Football Rugby Soccer | I Wilderness Trips | Z All of the above |
| E Swimming | I Martial Arts | |

7 Legal/Political Issues

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| A Disabled People | P Prostitution |
| B Anti-nuclear | H Consumer Rights |
| N Disarmament Peace | I Ageism |
| C Environmental Ecology | K Women Political |
| D Racism | Candidates |
| E ERA | M Wages for Housework |
| F Reproductive Rights | Z All of the above |

7 Health

- A Abortion/birth Control/Sterilization
- B Mental Health
- C Drugs and Alcohol
- D Women's Clinics/Self-Examination
- E Alternative Health Services (Herbolic, herbology, etc.)
- Z All women's health issues

7 Education

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A Women's Studies | F Secondary Education |
| B Science and Technology | G Primary Education |
| C Women's History/Literature | H Alternative Educational Programs |
| D Women's Psychology | |
| E Women in Graduate Programs | Z All of the above |

Violence Against Women

- A. Domestic Violence
B. Pornography
C. Rape
D. Incest
E. Sexual Harassment
Z. All of the above

7 Work

- A Non-traditional Employment
- B Women's Businesses
- C Displaced Homemakers and Employment
- D Childcare
- F Women's training programs
- G Women's professional groups/union committees/caucuses in your occupational area
- Z All of the above

A Lesbian

- A Yes, I am interested in this subject

A Women of Color

- A. Yes, I am interested in this subject.

Where did you get this form? THE ALBATROSS NEWSLETTER
GULF COAST FEMINIST/LESBIAN PUBLICATION
 Yes, I can help the network grow by distributing forms. Send 100 copies.

We are very interested in sending this brochure to the members of as many women's organizations as possible. If your organization would be willing to include this brochure in its own mailing in exchange for mailing labels from us, please contact us at the address on the back of this form.

HOW MANY BOOKS AND CASSETTE STUDY KITS DO YOU NEED?

Each person in a group study should have a copy of the book, Women, Men, and the Bible. Group leaders need the cassette study course, which includes the book. Additional copies of the book and the cassette study course are available at your local bookstore. Determine the number you need and fill out the order form below.

ORDER FORM

I need:

_____ copies, Women, Men, and the Bible (book) @ \$3.95
ISBN 0-687-45970-2

_____ copies, Women, Men, and the Bible Study Kit
(cassette study course) @ \$24.95, boxed Item No. 819148

\$ _____ Total Enclose check or money order

Signature

Name _____
(Please print or type)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Order from your bookstore or from Abingdon.

THE PLASTER SAINT

A very wise piece of advice, which St. Benedict gives to monks in his Rule, is that they should not desire to be called saints before they are holy, but that they should first become saints in order that their reputation for holiness may be based on reality. This brings out the great difference between real spiritual perfection and man's idea of perfection. Or perhaps one might say, more accurately, the difference between sanctity and narcissism.

The popular idea of a "saint" is, of course, quite naturally based on the sanctity which is presented for our veneration, in heroic men and women, by the Church. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the saints quickly become stereotyped in the mind of the average Christian, and everyone, on reflection, will easily admit that the stereotype tends to be unreal. The conventions of hagiography have usually accentuated the unreality of the picture, and pious art has, in most cases, successfully completed the work. In this way, the Christian who devotes himself to the pursuit of holiness unconsciously tends to reproduce in himself some features of the popular stereotyped image. Or rather, since it is fortunately difficult to succeed in this enterprise, he imagines himself in some sense obliged to follow the pattern, as if it were really a model proposed for his imitation by the Church herself, instead of a purely conventional and popular caricature of a mysterious reality—the Christlikeness of the saints.

The stereotyped image is easy to sketch out here: it is essentially an image without the slightest moral flaw. The

saint, if he ever sinned at all, eventually became impeccable after a perfect conversion. Impeccability not being quite enough, he is raised beyond the faintest possibility of feeling temptation. Of course he is tempted, but temptation provides no difficulties. He always has the absolute and heroic answer. He flings himself into fire, ice water or briars rather than even face a remote occasion of sin. His intentions are always the noblest. His words are always the most edifying clichés, fitting the situation with a devastating obviousness that silences even the thought of dialogue. Indeed, the "perfect" in this fearsome sense are elevated above the necessity or even the capacity for a fully human dialogue with their fellow men. They are without humor as they are without wonder, without feeling and without interest in the common affairs of mankind. Yet of course they always rush to the scene with the precise act of virtue called for by every situation. They are always there kissing the leper's sores at the very moment when the king and his noble attendants come around the corner and stop in their tracks, mute in admiration. . . .

There is no one who will not smile at the naïve beginner who trustingly embarks upon the reproduction of this kind of image in his life. He will always be told to face reality; yet when he is reminded of the sorry facts of life, do we not often assume, secretly, that he is, after all, right? Sanctity is indeed a cult of the *absolute*. It is intransigent, and does not even consider compromise. Do we not really, in our hearts, mean by this that the miracle of sanctity is somehow not only supernatural but even inhuman? Do we not, as a matter of fact, equate the supernatural with a flat denial of the human? Are not nature and grace diametrically opposed? Does not sanctity mean the absolute rejection and renunciation of all that accords with nature?

If we think this, we are in practice admitting the reality of the stereotyped image, and in that case we have no

alternative than to assume that this is the model that is supposed to be realized by the perfect Christian. By what right, then, do we dissuade people from seeking to realize what is in all truth their model?

The fact is that our concept of sanctity is ambiguous and obscure, and this is perhaps because our concept of grace and the supernatural is itself confused. The adage that grace "builds on nature" is by no means a cliché that was devised to excuse half measures in the spiritual life. It is the strict truth, and until we realize that before a man can become a saint he must first of all be a *man* in all the humanity and fragility of man's actual condition, we will never be able to understand the meaning of the word "saint." Not only were all the saints perfectly human, not only did their sanctity enrich and deepen their humanity, but the Holiest of all the Saints, the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, was himself the most deeply and perfectly human being who ever lived on the face of the earth. We must remember that human nature was, in him, quite perfect, and at the same time completely like our own frail and suffering nature in all things except sin. Now what is the "supernatural" if not the economy of our salvation in and through the Incarnate Word?

If we are to be "perfect" as Christ is perfect, we must strive to be as perfectly human as he, in order that he may unite us with his divine being and share with us his sonship of the heavenly Father. Hence sanctity is not a matter of being *less* human, but *more* human than other men. This implies a greater capacity for concern, for suffering, for understanding, for sympathy, and also for humor, for joy, for appreciation of the good and beautiful things of life. It follows that a pretended "way of perfection" that simply destroys or frustrates human values precisely because they are human, and in order to set oneself apart from the rest of men as an object of wonder, is doomed to be nothing but a caricature. And such caricaturing of sanctity is indeed a sin against faith in the

Incarnation. It shows contempt for the humanity for which Christ did not hesitate to die on the cross.

However, we must be careful not to confuse genuinely human values with the rather less than human values that come to be accepted in a disordered society. In actual fact, we are suffering more from the distortion and underdevelopment of our deepest human tendencies than from a superabundance of animal instincts. That is why the stern asceticism that was devised to control violent passions may do more harm than good when it is applied to a person whose emotions have never properly matured and whose instinctual life is suffering from weakness and disorder.

We must reflect more deeply than we do on the effect of modern technological life upon the emotional and instinctual development of man. It is quite possible that the person whose life is divided between tending a machine and watching TV is sooner or later going to suffer a radical deprivation in his nature and humanity.

Holiness presupposes not only a normal human intelligence, properly developed and formed by Christian education, a normal human will, a trained liberty capable of self-commitment and self-oblation, but even before all this it presupposes sound and ordered human emotions. Grace builds on nature not by suppressing instinct but by healing and elevating it to a spiritual level. There must always be a proper place for healthy, instinctive spontaneity in the Christian life. The emotions and instincts of man were at work in the sacred humanity of Christ Our Lord: He showed in all things a sensitive and warmly responsive humanness. The Christian who wants to imitate his Master must learn to do so not by imposing a crude and violent control on his emotions (and in most cases his efforts to do so will be a failure) but by letting grace form and develop his emotional life in the service of charity.

Jesus asked the Pharisees: "How can you believe, who

seek glory one from another?" (Jn. 5:44). To seek a heroicity of virtue that will give us glory in the eyes of other men is in reality to weaken our faith. The true saint is not one who has become convinced that he himself is holy, but one who is overwhelmed by the realization that God, and God alone, is holy. He is so awestruck with the reality of the divine holiness that he begins to see it everywhere. Eventually, he may be able to see it in himself too: but surely he will see it there last of all, because in himself he will continue to experience the nothingness, the pseudo reality of egoism and sin. Yet even in the darkness of our disposition to evil shines the presence and the mercy of the divine Saviour. The saint is capable, as Dostoevsky said, of loving others even in their sin. For what he sees in all things and in all men is the object of the divine compassion.

The saint, then, seeks not his own glory but the glory of God. And in order that God may be glorified in all things, the saint wishes himself to be nothing but a pure instrument of the divine will. He wants himself to be simply a window through which God's mercy shines on the world. And for this he strives to be holy. He strives to practice virtue heroically, not in order to be known as a virtuous and holy man, but in order that the goodness of God may never be obscured by any selfish act of his.

Hence it is that he who loves God, and seeks the glory of God, seeks to become, by God's grace, perfect in love, as the "heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48).

IDEAS AND REALITY

It is always a little foolish to try to set down, in a few clear formulas, the essence of Christian perfection. Sometimes this has to be done. But whenever we try to do it, we must remind ourselves that we do not grasp the meaning of the words right away, and we must take steps to avoid creating the impression that sanctity can be easily achieved by following some simple formula. "Becoming a saint" is not just a matter of picking out a suitable recipe and cooking up the various ingredients of the Christian life according to a formula which pleases our own taste. Yet this is what some spiritual books would sometimes seem to do. And there are always those "holy souls" who have discovered a new method, which sums it all up, and which will henceforth make the whole thing very simple for everyone.

It is of course natural to look for a simple method of solving all spiritual problems. Traditionally, the most fundamental question a man can ask is "What must we do?" (Acts 2:37). The Christian answer, "Repent, be baptized, . . . to have your sins forgiven; then you will receive the Holy Spirit" (38), is not the exposition of a "method" or a technique. On the contrary, what St. Peter was thus telling the hearers of his first sermon on the first Pentecost, was that salvation did not consist in following a method so much as in becoming a member of the People of God, the Body of Christ, and living as a member of that Body, with the life of that People, which is a life of love. But love in this context is not simply a question of affectivity and benign interior dispositions.

⑤ ordination ~~is~~ as personal calling.

① formal ministry & personal ministry — still ministry.

⑥ stages to ordination.

① examination of worth preparatory to ordination:

- time spent proving self in local ministry → ordination (Today's Church) not necess. ← Seminary.
- Presbyterian: examination — women passing thru that is education to Society

② Seminary as means to / traditional approach ministry:

Cindy: community personal ministry vs "ordained" demands of institutional approach in church ministry — don't know how to respond.

⑦ special ministries:

① to runaway women / battered wives —

- divorced wives saddled w/ children lost — needing ministry
 - legal
 - contacting friend on occasion of being beaten → powerful
 - money blackmail
 - restrainer force in community
- Lesbian women w/ children
 - husbands use children as trump card
- legal stance (not built on defiance of prev. law)

② When ordination is not proposed as alternative in particular denomination.

③ reason for women to be ordained - to serve as models

- Judy's church: new - open to women's role

- sister supportive

Cindy: "marry a minister so that is as closest to glory as a woman can get."

- Presbyterian Task force on women: minister's wives most vocal as feel need to be involved.

④ women in ordination = danger of anger blinding women to love of God -

⑤ time when women will not be frustrated w/ respect to ministry.

① some groups ordain women w/o jobs

② lack of jobs:

③ aren't wanting women in ministry.

④ women

WOMEN NOT PREPARED to accept reflection on self-worth.

* motherhood: generated a lot of heat in room -

- one by one single women projecting own frustrations on another.

IPED
Princeton

② South: lack of people to
fill jobs. - yet least willing
to ordain women

③ "Paul: let the women be silent"
greek word: babbling (gossiping, etc)

Elizabeth Stanton The Seneca Falls Declaration
Alice Rossi The Feminist's Paper

④ women as threat to (male) established
ministry -

⑤ Seminaries opening to women -
⑥ changes perspective of
education (not just young
men: older married women
w/ children)

⑦ 50% going for M.Div at Div.

⑧ needs for women ministries -
J.I. N.S. - Juveniles in Need of
P Supervision.

Saturday, December 3, 1977

Grant Auditorium, Syracuse University

Sponsored by the Women's Studies Program and Women's Center of Syracuse University, the Graduate Student Organization, Hendricks Chapel, the Religion Department of Syracuse University, and the Syracuse Area Interreligious Council (S.A.I.C.).

Morning Program

"The Five Joys of the Virgin"--fruits of medieval art, literature for today. Linda Sexson, Lecturer, Montana State University, Doctoral Candidate, Syracuse U.

"Two Views in Haitian (Voodoo) Religion"--blendings of African, Christian, indigenous and other elements. Dr. Karen McCarthy Brown, Assistant Professor, the Sociology of Religion, Drew Theological Seminary, The Veve (Ceremonial Drawings), Ph.D., Temple University.

"Mary Adeline and the Birth Story"--life story mask ritual performance presented throughout the U.S. at universities, theological schools and national denominational conferences. Suzanne Benton, sculptor, one-woman art shows and ritual events in the Far East, Europe, Africa, Israel, author, The Art of Welded Sculpture.

Afternoon Workshops: Resources for Personal Vision

1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

A. "Free? Who, Me?"--Beyond our experience of conflict with traditional expectations, we develop our capacities and personal freedom as a divine possibility. The Rev. Betty Bone Schiess, Chaplain at Large, Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University; one of the original Episcopal woman priests. Living Room, Community House, 711 Comstock Avenue.

B. "The Interior Understanding and Woman's Quest"--Theresa of Avila and other women saints are crucial models of self-realization for reflections on the aesthetic and spiritual journeys which join outer and inner life rhythms. Karen Laud Novak, painter, printmaker, illustrator, sculptor and author of articles on art, theology and imagination, who has had one-woman shows in Boston, Princeton, New York, Hartford, and San Francisco. East Room, Community House, 711 Comstock Avenue.

C. "The Archetype We've Ignored: The Active Feminine"--Keynote speaker, Linda Sexson. Panel Room, Community House, 711 Comstock Avenue.

D. "Revaluing Women in the Bible as Personal Resources"--including guidance on recent scholarly and lay study materials available on women in the Bible. Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church, Providence, Rhode Island, and author of "Woman in the Bible: The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful". Library, Community House.

E. ~~"Songs of the Soul"~~--experiencing some poems and music by women in celebration of themselves and love. Susan Arslanian, M.A., counseling and guidance, and M.Div. candidate at Drew Theological School. Women's Center, 750 Ostrom Avenue.

3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

A. "The Home as Sacred Space"--an evaluation of the effect of women's emergence on the space where woman engages in daily rituals enacted outside the dominant 20th-century sense and time patterns, in mythic time. Dr. Kathryn Allen Rabuzzi, Assistant Professor of English at LeMoyne College, Humanities Ph.D., Syracuse University. Living Room, Community House, 711 Comstock Avenue.

B. "The Changing Spectrum of Woman's Possibilities"--exploring new configurations of the range of feminine archetypes discussed by Erich Neuman in his classic study, The Great Mother. Dr. Frances Belknap Sullivan, Professor in Religious Studies, LeMoyne College, Religion Ph.D., Syracuse University. Panel Room, Community House, 711 Comstock.

C. "St. Bridget's Influence on the Nativity in Renaissance Art"--Women with crucial spiritual roles, the Madonna and others, were portrayed often with great sensitivity but almost solely through the eyes of male artists: The vision of one woman had a major effect on representations of the Christmas story. Dr. Alison Luchs, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, Syracuse University, Johns Hopkins Ph.D, and "Some Modern Secular Madonnas"--motherhood portrayed in late 19th- and early 20th-century paintings by Mary Cassatt, Paula Modersohn-Becker, and Alice Neel. Dr. Ellen C. Oppler, Associate Professor of Fine Arts, author of essays on Modersohn-Becker and a forthcoming anthology on Picasso's Guernica. Nursery, Community House, 711 Comstock Avenue.

D. ~~"Woman: Clothed in the Sun and the Moon"~~--a workshop for women on apparitions of the Virgin, supernatural and otherwise. The question: "Who in God's name is the Virgin Mary?" explored through her traditionally-recognized appearances and the experience of 14 women at a month-long woman and spirituality conference. Susan Arslanian, psychiatric counselor and Presbyterian ministry student. Women's Center, 750 Ostrom Avenue.

E. "The Reappropriation of the Feminine by Men"--To be announced. Library, Comm. Hse.

There will also be a book sale and concluding celebration.

Coming Event: Concert by the Schola Cantorum of Syracuse, Barry Torres, Director. Solemn Latin Liturgy for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Missa Ave Maris Stella and Ave Maria, virgo serena of Josquin DesPrez, Gregorian Proper sung by Women's Choir. Wednesday, December 7, 8:15 p.m., Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

SCHEMA II

MOON

HEAVEN

MOON

MOON

RETORT

GRAIL

LOCOS

WISDOM

WATER OF LIFE

SUN

SOMA

MEDICINE

HOST

CROWN

oven

cup

breath

milk

well

phoenix

intoxicant

poison

bread

mandala

kettle

bowl

spring

cross

gallows

pillar

light

torch

post

tree

liquor

sap

plant

ear of grain

fruit

vegetation

garden

field

vessel
chest
sack
barrel

body
box
trough
pocket

MOUTH

HEART

BREAST

BELLY

pond

ocean

water

nest
bed
coffin
cradle
wagon
ship

cornucopia
legume
pomegranate
poppy

shield
cloak
dress
covering
veil
net

egg

pig
shellfish
owl
octopus

mountain

cave

cliff

Earth

grave

urn

WOMB

maw

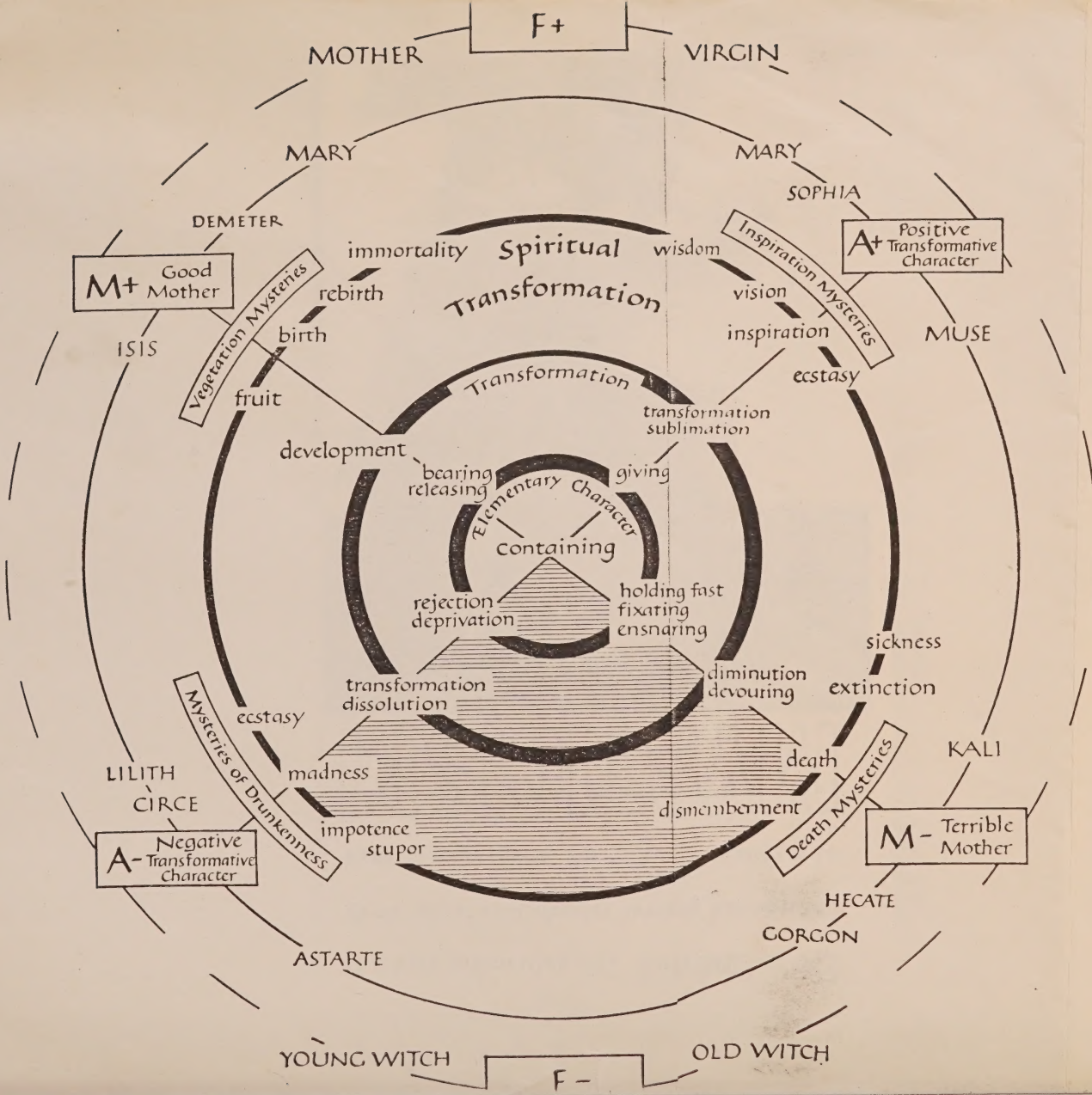
underworld

night

hell

chasm

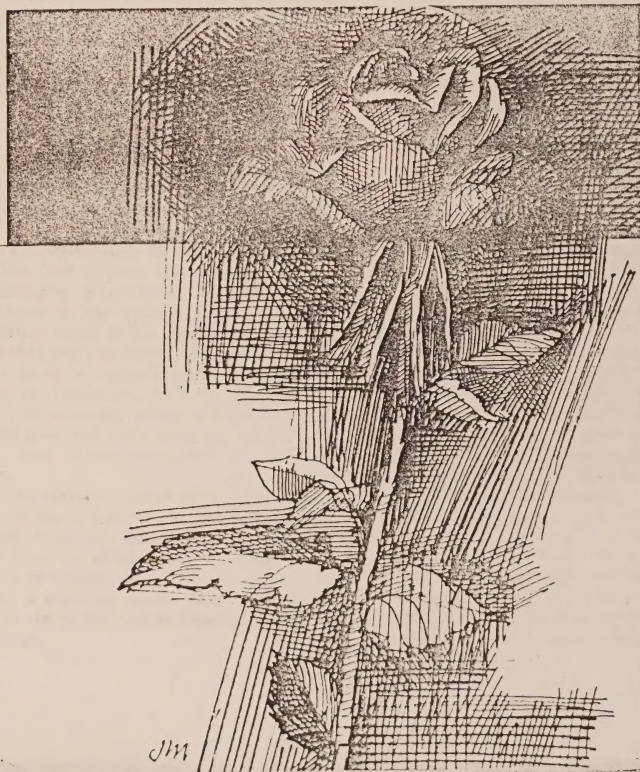
Earth



Evelyn Underhill This outstanding work is an
unsurpassed general introduction to the study
of mysticism

D73 A Dutton Paperback \$6.75

MYSTICISM



CHAPTER III

MYSTICISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

Man's craving to know more and love more—His mental machinery—Emotion, Intellect, Will—Their demand of absolute objects—Conation and Cognition—Action and Thought—Importance of emotion—Love and Will—Concentration—Contemplation—The mystic sense—its liberation—Passivity—The Mystic State—Supraliminal and subliminal personality—The "ground of the soul"—The "unconscious mind"—extravagances of this doctrine—The unconscious not the equivalent of the transcendental self—Mystical theory of man's spiritual sense—The New Birth—The Spiritual Self—Synteresis—The Spark of the Soul—the organ of transcendental consciousness—Transcendental Feeling—its expression—The Spark of the Soul sleeps in normal men—The mystic's business is to wake it—Function of contemplation—it alters the field of consciousness—Dual personality—The hidden self of the Mystic—its emergence—Entrancement—Mystical ill-health—Psycho-physical phenomena—Mysticism and hysteria—Mysticism and longevity—The mystics' psychic peculiarities—their wholeness of life—Genius and mysticism compared—Philo on inspiration—The function of passivity—Automatic states—Summary and conclusion

WE come now to consider the mental apparatus which is at the disposal of the self: to ask what it can tell us of the method by which she may escape from the prison of the sense-world, transcend its rhythm, and attain knowledge of—or conscious contact with—a supra-sensible Reality. We have seen the normal self shut within that prison, and making, by the help of science and of philosophy, a survey of the premises and furniture: testing the thickness of the walls and speculating on the possibility of trustworthy news from without penetrating to her cell. Shut with her in that cell, two forces, the desire to know more and the desire to love more, are ceaselessly at work. Where the first of these cravings predominates, we call the result a philosophical or a scientific temperament; where it is overpowered by the ardour of unsatisfied love, the self's reaction upon things becomes poetic, artistic, and characteristically—though not always explicitly—religious.

We have seen further that a certain number of persons declare that they have escaped from the prison. Have they done so, it can only be in order to satisfy these two hungry desires, for these, and these only, make that a prison which might otherwise be a comfortable hotel; and since, in varying degrees, these desires are in all of us, active or latent, it is clearly worth while to discover, if we can, the weak point in the walls, and method of achieving this one possible way of escape.

MYSTICISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

45

Before we try to define in psychological language the way in which the mystic slips the fetters of sense, sets out upon his journey towards home, it seems well to examine the machinery which is at the disposal of the normal, conscious self: the creature, or part of a creature, which we recognize as "ourselves." The older psychologists were accustomed to say that the messages from the outer world awaken in that self three main forms of activity.

(1) They arouse movements of attraction or repulsion, of desire or distaste; which vary in intensity from the semi-conscious cravings of the hungry infant to the passions of the lover, artist, or fanatic. (2) They stimulate a sort of digestive process, in which she combines and cogitates upon the material presented to her; finally absorbing a certain number of the resulting concepts and making them part of herself or of her world. (3) The movements of desire, or the action of reason, or both in varying combinations, awaken in her a determination by which percept and concept issue in action; bodily, mental, or spiritual. Hence, the main aspects of the self were classified as Emotion, Intellect, and Will: and the individual temperament was regarded as emotional, intellectual, or volitional, according to whether feeling, thought, or will assumed the reins.

Modern psychologists have moved away from this diagrammatic conception, and incline more and more to dwell upon the unity of the psyche—that hypothetical self which none have ever seen—and on some aspect of its energetic desire, its *libido*, or "hormic drive" as the ruling factor of its life. These conceptions are useful to the student of mysticism, though they cannot be accepted uncritically or regarded as complete.

Now the unsatisfied psyche in her emotional aspect wants, as we have said, to love more; her curious intellect wants to know more. The awakened human creature suspects that both appetites are being kept on a low diet; that there really is more to love, and more to know, somewhere in the mysterious world without, and further that its powers of affection and understanding are worthy of some greater and more durable objective than that provided by the illusions of sense. Urged therefore by the cravings of feeling or of thought, consciousness is always trying to run out to the encounter of the Absolute, and always being forced to return. The neat philosophical system, the diagrams of science, the "sunset-touch," are tried in turn. Art and life, the accidents of our humanity, may foster an emotional outlook; till the moment in which the neglected intellect arises and pronounces such an outlook to have no validity. Metaphysics and science seem to offer to the intellect an open window towards truth; till the heart looks out and declares this landscape to be a chill desert in which

she can find no nourishment. These diverse aspects of things must be either fused or transcended if the whole self is to be satisfied; for the reality which she seeks has got to meet both claims and pay in full.

When Dionysius the Areopagite divided those angels who stand nearest God into the Seraphs who are aflame with perfect love, and the Cherubs who are filled with perfect knowledge, he only gave expression to the two most intense aspirations of the human soul, and described under an image the two-fold condition of that Beatific Vision which is her goal.¹

There is a sense in which it may be said, that the desire of knowledge is a part of the desire of perfect love: since one aspect of that all inclusive passion is clearly a longing to know, in the deepest, fullest, closest sense, the thing adored. Love's characteristic activity—for Love, all wings, is inherently active, and "cannot be lazy," as the mystics say—is a quest, an outgoing towards an object desired, which only when possessed will be fully known, and only when fully known can be perfectly adored.² Intimate communion, no less than worship, is of its essence. Joyous fruition is its proper end. This is true of all Love's quests, whether the Beloved be human or divine—the bride, the Grail, the Mystic Rose, the Plenitude of God. But there is no sense in which it can be said that the desire of love is merely a part of the desire of perfect knowledge: for that strictly intellectual ambition includes no adoration, no self-spending, no reciprocity of feeling between Knower and Known. Mere knowledge, taken alone, is a matter of receiving, not of acting: of eyes, not wings: a dead alive business at the best. There is thus a sharp distinction to be drawn between these two great expressions of life: the energetic love, the passive knowledge. One is related to the eager, outgoing activity, the dynamic impulse to *do* somewhat, physical, mental, or spiritual, which is inherent in all living things and which psychologists call *conation*; the other to the indwelling consciousness, the passive knowing somewhat, which they call *cognition*.

Now "conation" is almost wholly the business of will, but of will stimulated by emotion: for wilful action of every kind, however intellectual it may seem, is always the result of interest, and

¹ The wise Cherubs, according to the beautiful imagery of Dionysius, are "all eyes," but the loving Seraphs are "all wings." Whilst the Seraphs, the figure of intensest Love, "move perpetually towards things divine," ardour and energy being their characteristics, the characteristic of the Cherubs is receptiveness, their power of absorbing the rays of the Supernal Light. (Dionysius the Areopagite, "De Celesti Ierarchia," vi. 2, and vii. 1.)

² So Réccjac says of the mystics, "They desire to know, only that they may love; and their desire for union with the principle of things in God, Who is the sum of them all, is founded on a feeling which is neither curiosity nor self-interest" ("Fondements de la Connaissance Mystique," p. 50).

interest involves feeling. We act because we feel we want to; feel we must. Whether the inspiring force be a mere preference or an overwhelming urge, our impulse to "do" is a synthesis of determination and desire. All man's achievements are the result of conation, never of mere thought. "The intellect by itself moves nothing," said Aristotle, and modern psychology has but affirmed this law. Hence his quest of Reality is never caused, though it may be greatly assisted, by the intellectual aspect of his consciousness; for the reasoning powers as such have little initiative. Their province is analytic, not exploratory. They stay at home, dissecting and arranging matter that comes to hand; and do not adventure beyond their own region in search of food. Thought does not penetrate far into an object in which the self feels no interest—*i.e.*, towards which she does not experience a "conative" movement of attraction, of desire—for interest is the only method known to us of arousing the will, and securing the fixity of attention necessary to any intellectual process. None think for long about anything for which they do not care; that is to say, which does not touch some aspect of their emotional life. They may hate it, love it, fear it, want it; but they must have some feeling about it. Feeling is the tentacle we stretch out to the world of things.

Here the lesson of psychology is the same as that which Dante brought back from his pilgrimage; the supreme importance and harmonious movement of *il desiro* and *il velle*. *Si come rota ch'egualmente è mossa*,¹ these move together to fulfil the Cosmic Plan. In all human life, in so far as it is not merely a condition of passive "awareness," the law which he found implicit in the universe is the law of the individual mind. Not logic, not "common sense," but *l'amor che move il sole e le altre stelle* is the motive force of the spirit of man: in the inventors, the philosophers, and the artists, no less than in the heroes and in the saints.

The vindication of the importance of feeling in our life, and in particular its primacy over reason in all that has to do with man's contact with the transcendental world, has been one of the great achievements of modern psychology. In the sphere of religion it is now acknowledged that "God known of the heart" gives a better account of the character of our spiritual experience than "God guessed at by the brain"; that the loving intuition is more fruitful and more trustworthy than the dialectic proof. One by one the commonplaces of mysticism are thus rediscovered by official science, and given their proper place in the psychology of the spiritual life. Thus Leuba, hardly a friendly witness, is found to agree with the Fourth Evangelist that "Life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is in the last analysis the end of

¹ Par. xxxiii. 143.

religion,"¹ and we have seen that life, as we know it, has the character of a purposive striving, more directly dependent on will and feeling than on thought. Of this drive, this urge, thought indeed is but the servant; a skilled and often arrogant servant, with a constant tendency to usurpation. Some form of feeling—interest, desire, fear, appetite—must supply the motive power. Without this, the will would be dormant, and the intellect lapse into a calculating machine.

Further, "the heart has its reasons which the mind knows not of." It is a matter of experience that in our moments of deep emotion, transitory though they be, we plunge deeper into the reality of things than we can hope to do in hours of the most brilliant argument. At the touch of passion doors fly open which logic has battered on in vain: for passion rouses to activity not merely the mind, but the whole vitality of man. It is the lover, the poet, the mourner, the convert, who shares for a moment the mystic's privilege of lifting that Veil of Isis which science handles so helplessly, leaving only her dirty fingerprints behind. The heart, eager and restless, goes out into the unknown, and brings home, literally and actually, "fresh food for thought." Hence those who "feel to think" are likely to possess a richer, more real, if less orderly, experience than those who "think to feel."

This psychological law, easily proved in regard to earthly matters, holds good also upon the supersensual plane. It was expressed once for all by the author of "The Cloud of Unknowing" when he said of God, "By love He may be gotten and holden, but by thought of understanding, never."² That exalted feeling, that "secret blind love pressing," not the neat deductions of logic, the apologist's "proofs" of the existence of the Absolute, unseals the eyes to things unseen before. "Therefore," says the same mystic, "what time that thou purposeth thee to this work, and feelest by grace that thou art called of God, lift then up thine heart unto God with a meek stirring of love; and mean God that made thee and bought thee, and that graciously hath called thee to thy degree, and receive none other thought of God. And yet not all these but if thou list; for it sufficeth thee enough, a naked intent direct unto God without any other cause than Himself."³ Here we see emotion at its proper work; the movement of desire passing over at once into the act of concentration, the gathering up of all the powers of the self into a state of determined attention, which is the business of the Will. "This driving and drawing," says Ruysbroeck, "we feel in the heart and in the unity of all our bodily powers, and especially in the desirous powers."⁴ This act of perfect concentra-

¹ The *Mystic*, July, 1901, p. 572. ² "The Cloud of Unknowing," cap. vi.
³ *Op. cit.*, cap. vii. ⁴ "De Ornatu Spiritualium Nuptiarum," l. ii. cap. v.

tion, the passionate focussing of the self upon one point, when it is applied "with a naked intent" to real and transcendental things, constitutes in the technical language of mysticism the state of recollection:⁵ a condition which is peculiarly characteristic of the mystical consciousness, and is the necessary prelude of pure contemplation, that state in which the mystic enters into communion with Reality.

We have then arrived so far in our description of the mechanism of the mystic. Possessed like other men of powers of feeling, thought, and will, it is essential that his love and his determination, even more than his thought, should be set upon Transcendent Reality. He must feel a strong emotional attraction toward the supersensual Object of his quest: that love which scholastic philosophy defined as the force or power which causes every creature to follow out the trend of its own nature. Of this must be born the will to attain communion with that Absolute Object. This will, this burning and active desire, must crystallize into and express itself by that definite and conscious concentration of the whole self upon the Object, which precedes the contemplative state. We see already how far astray are those who look upon the mystical temperament as passive in type.

Our next concern, then, would seem to be with this condition of contemplation: what it does and whither it leads. What (a) its psychological explanation and (b) its empirical value? Now, in dealing with this, and other rare mental conditions, we are of course trying to describe from without that which can only adequately be described from within; which is as much as to say that only mystics can really write about mysticism. Fortunately, many mystics have so written; and we, from their experiences and from the explorations of psychology upon another plane, are able to make certain elementary deductions. It appears generally from these that the act of contemplation is for the mystic a psychic gateway; a method of going from one level of consciousness to another. In technical language it is the condition under which he shifts his "field of perception" and obtains his characteristic outlook on the universe. That there is such a characteristic outlook, peculiar to no creed or race, is proved by the history of mysticism; which demonstrates plainly enough that in some men another sort of consciousness, another "sense," may be liberated beyond the normal powers we have discussed. This "sense" has attachments at each point to emotion, to intellect, and to will. It can express itself under each of the aspects which these terms connote. Yet it differs from and transcends the emotional, intellectual, and volitional life of ordinary men. It was recognized by

⁵ See below, Pt. II, Cap. VI.

Plato as that consciousness which could apprehend the real world of the Ideas. Its development is the final object of that education which his "Republic" describes. It is called by Plotinus "Another intellect, different from that which reasons and is denominated rational."¹ Its business, he says, is the perception of the super-sensual—or, in Neoplatonic language, the *intelligible* world. It is the sense which, in the words of the "Theologia Germanica," has "the power of seeing into eternity,"² the "mysterious eye of the soul" by which St. Augustine saw "the light that never changes."³ It is, says Al Ghazzali, a Persian mystic of the eleventh century, "like an immediate perception, as if one touched its object with one's hand."⁴ In the words of his great Christian successor, St. Bernard, "it may be defined as the soul's true unerring intuition, the unhesitating apprehension of truth";⁵ which "simple vision of truth," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "ends in a movement of desire."⁶

It is infused with burning love, for it seems to its possessors to be primarily a movement of the heart: with intellectual subtlety, for its ardour is wholly spent upon the most sublime object of thought: with unflinching will, for its adventures are undertaken in the teeth of the natural doubts, prejudices, languors, and self-indulgence of man. These adventures, looked upon by those who stay at home as a form of the Higher Laziness, are in reality the last and most arduous labours which the human spirit is called to perform. They are the only known methods by which we can come into conscious possession of all our powers; and, rising from the lower to the higher levels of consciousness, become aware of that larger life in which we are immersed, attain communion with the transcendent Personality in Whom that life is resumed.

Mary has chosen the better, not the idler part; for her gaze is directed towards those First Principles without which the activity of Martha would have no meaning at all. In vain does sardonic common sense, confronted with the contemplative type, reiterate the sneer of Mucius, "Encore sont-ils heureux que la pauvre Marthe leur fasse la cuisine." It remains a paradox of the mystics that the passivity at which they appear to aim is really a state of the most intense activity: more, that where it is wholly absent no great creative action can take place. In it, the superficial self compels itself to be still, in order that it may liberate another

¹ Plotinus, *Ennead* vi. 9.

² "Theologia Germanica," cap. vii. (trans. Winkworth).

³ *Aug. Conf.*, bk. vii. cap. x.

⁴ A. Schmolders, "Essai sur les Écoles Philosophique chez les Arabes," p. 68.

⁵ "De Consideratione," bk. ii. cap. ii.

⁶ "Summa Theologica," ii. ii. q. cxxx. art. 3. eds. 1 and 3.

more deep-seated power which is, in the ecstasy of the contemplative genius, raised to the highest pitch of efficiency.

"This restful travail," said Walter Hilton, "is full far from fleshly idleness and from blind security. It is full of ghostly work, but it is called rest, for grace looseth the heavy yoke of fleshly love from the soul and maketh it mighty and free through the gift of the holy ghostly love for to work gladly, softly, and delectably. . . . Therefore is it called an holy idleness and a rest most busy; and so it is in *stillness* from the great crying and the beastly noise of fleshly desires."¹

If those who have cultivated this latent power be correct in their statements, the self was mistaken in supposing herself to be entirely shut off from the true external universe. She has, it seems, certain tentacles which, once she learns to uncurl them, will stretch sensitive fingers far beyond that limiting envelope in which her normal consciousness is contained, and give her news of a higher reality than that which can be deduced from the reports of the senses. The fully developed and completely conscious human soul can open as an anemone does, and *know* the ocean in which she is bathed. This act, this condition of consciousness, in which barriers are obliterated, the Absolute flows in on us, and we, rushing out to its embrace, "find and feel the Infinite above all reason and above all knowledge,"² is the true "mystical state." The value of contemplation is that it tends to produce this state, release this transcendental sense; and so turns the "lower servitude" in which the natural man lives under the sway of his earthly environment to the "higher servitude" of fully conscious dependence on that Reality "in Whom we live and move and have our being."

What then, we ask, is the nature of this special sense—this transcendental consciousness—and how does contemplation liberate it?

Any attempt to answer this question brings upon the scene another aspect of man's psychic life: an aspect of paramount importance to the student of the mystic type. We have reviewed the chief ways in which our surface consciousness reacts upon experience: a surface consciousness which has been trained through long ages to deal with the universe of sense. We know, however, that the personality of man is a far deeper and more mysterious thing than the sum of his conscious feeling, thought, and will: that this superficial self—this Ego of which each of us is aware—hardly counts in comparison with the depths of being which it hides. "There is a root or depth in thee," says Law, "from whence all these faculties come forth as lines from a centre,

¹ Walter Hilton, "The Scale of Perfection," bk. ii. cap. xl.

² Ruysbroeck, "De Septem Gradibus Amoris," cap. xiv.

or as branches from the body of a tree. This depth is called the centre, the fund, or bottom, of the soul. This depth is the unity, the Eternity, I had almost said the infinity of thy soul, for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it, or give it any rest, but the infinity of God."¹

Since normal man is utterly unable to set up relations with spiritual reality by means of his feeling, thought, and will, it is clearly in this depth of being—in these unplumbed levels of personality—that we must search, if we would find the organ, the power, by which he is to achieve the mystic quest. That alteration of consciousness which takes place in contemplation can only mean the emergence from this "fund or bottom of the soul" of some faculty which diurnal life keeps hidden "in the deeps."

Modern psychology, in its doctrine of the unconscious or subliminal personality, has acknowledged this fact of a range of psychic life lying below and beyond the conscious field. Indeed, it has so dwelt upon and defined this shadowy region—which is really less a "region" than a useful name—that it sometimes seems to know more about the unconscious than about the conscious life of man. There it finds, side by side, the sources of his most animal instincts, his least explicable powers, his most spiritual intuitions: the "ape and tiger," and the "soul." Genius and prophecy, insomnia and infatuation, clairvoyance, hypnotism, hysteria, and "Christian" science—all are explained by the "unconscious mind." In his destructive moods the psychologist has little apparent difficulty in reducing the chief phenomena of religious and mystical experience to activities of the "unconscious," seeking an oblique satisfaction of repressed desires. Where he undertakes the more dangerous duties of apologetic, he explains the same phenomena by saying that "God speaks to man in the sub-consciousness,"² by which he can only mean that our apprehensions of the eternal have the character of intuition rather than of thought. Yet the "unconscious" after all is merely a convenient name for the aggregate of those powers, parts, or qualities of the whole self which at any given moment are not conscious, or that the Ego is not conscious of. Included in the unconscious region of an average healthy man are all those automatic activities by which the life of the body is carried on: all those "uncivilized" instincts and vices, those remains of the ancestral savage, which education has

¹ "The Spirit of Prayer" ("Liberal and Mystical Writings of William Law," p. 14). So too St. François de Sales says: "This root is the depth of the spirit, *Mens*, which others call the Kingdom of God." The same doctrine appears, under various symbols, in all the Christian Mystics.

² Cutten, "Psychological Phenomena of Christianity," p. 18. James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 155. For a temperate and balanced discussion, see Pratt: "The Religious Consciousness."

forced out of the stream of consciousness and which now only send their messages to the surface in a carefully disguised form. There too work in the hiddenness those longings for which the busy life of the world leaves no place; and there lies that deep pool, that heart of personality, from which in moments of lucidity a message may reach the conscious field. Hence in normal men the best and worst, most savage and most spiritual parts of character, are bottled up "below the threshold." Often the partisans of the "unconscious" forget to mention this.

It follows, then, that whilst we may find it convenient and indeed necessary to avail ourselves of the symbols and diagrams of psychology in tracking out the mystic way, we must not forget the large and vague significance which attaches to these symbols, and the hypothetical character of many of the entities they represent. Nor must we allow ourselves to use the "unconscious" as the equivalent of man's transcendental sense. Here the mystics have surely displayed a more scientific spirit, a more delicate power of analysis, than the psychologists. They, too, were aware that in normal men the spiritual sense lies below the threshold of consciousness. Though they had not at their command the spatial metaphors of the modern school, and could not describe man's ascent toward God in those picturesque terms of levels and up-rushes, margins and fields, projection, repression, and sublimation, which now come so naturally to investigators of the spiritual life, they leave us in no doubt as to their view of the facts. Further, man's spiritual history primarily meant for them, as it means for us, the emergence of this transcendental sense; its capture of the field of consciousness, and the opening up of those paths which permit the inflow of a larger spiritual life, the perception of a higher reality. This, in so far as it was an isolated act, was "contemplation." When it was part of the general life process, and had permanent results, they called it the New Birth, which "maketh alive." The faculty or personality concerned in the "New Birth"—the "spiritual man," capable of the spiritual vision and life, which was dissociated from the "earthly man" adapted only to the natural life—was always sharply distinguished by them from the total personality, conscious or unconscious. It was something definite; a bit or spot of man which, belonging not to Time but to Eternity, was different in kind from the rest of his human nature, framed in all respects to meet the demands of the merely natural world.¹ The business of the mystic in the eyes of these old specialists was to remake, transmute, his total personality in the interest

¹ Note to the 12th Edition. During the eighteen years which have elapsed since this chapter was written, much work has been done on the psychology of mysticism. After suffering severely at the hands of the "new psychologists" the contemplative faculty is once more taken seriously; and there is even some dis-

of his spiritual self; to bring it out of the hiddenness, and unify himself about it as a centre, thus "putting on divine humanity."

The divine nucleus, the point of contact between man's life and the divine life in which it is immersed and sustained, has been given many names in course of the development of mystical doctrine. All clearly mean the same thing, though emphasizing different aspects of its life. Sometimes it is called the Synteresis,¹ the keeper or preserver of his being; sometimes the Spark of the Soul, the *Funkein* of the German mystics; sometimes its Apex, the point at which it touches the heavens. Then, with a sudden flight to the other end of the symbolic scale, and in order to emphasize its participation in pure Being, rather than its difference from mere nature, it is called the Ground of the Soul, the foundation or basal stuff indwelt by God, whence springs all spiritual life. Clearly all these guesses and suggestions aim at one goal and are all to be understood in a symbolic sense; for, as Malaval observed in answer to his disciples' anxious inquiries on this subject, "since the soul of man is a spiritual thing and thus cannot have divisions or parts, consequently it cannot have height or depth, summit or surface. But because we judge spiritual things by the help of material things, since we know these better and they are more familiar to us, we call the highest of all forms of conception the summit, and the easier way of comprehending things the surface, of the understanding."²

Here at any rate, whatever name we may choose to give it, is the organ of man's spiritual consciousness; the place where he meets the Absolute, the germ of his real life. Here is the seat of that deep "Transcendental Feeling," the "beginning and end of metaphysics" which is, says Professor Stewart, "at once the solemn sense of Timeless Being—of 'That which was and is and ever shall be' overshadowing us—and the conviction that Life is good." "I hold," says the same writer, "that it is in Transcendental Feeling, manifested normally as Faith in the Value of Life, and ecstatically as sense of Timeless Being, and not in Thought proceeding by way of speculative construction, that Consciousness comes nearest to the object of metaphysics, Ultimate Reality."³

position to accept or restate the account of it given by the mystics. Thus Bremond ("Prière et Poesie" and "Introduction à la Philosophie de la Prière") insists on the capital distinction between the surface-mind, capable of rational knowledge, and the deeper mind, organ of mystical knowledge, and operative in varying degrees in religious, poetic, and æsthetic apprehensions.

¹ An interesting discussion of the term "Synteresis" will be found in Dr. Inge's "Christian Mysticism," Appendix C, pp. 359, 360.

² "La Pratique de la Vraie Théologie Mystique," vol. 1, p. 204.

³ J. A. Stewart, "The Myths of Plato," pp. 41, 43. Perhaps I may point out that this Transcendental Feeling—the ultimate material alike of prayer and of poetry—has, like the mystic consciousness, a dual perception of Reality: static being and dynamic life. See above, p. 42.

The existence of such a "sense," such an integral part or function of the complete human being, has been affirmed and dwelt upon not only by the mystics, but by seers and teachers of all times and creeds: by Egypt, Greece, and India, the poets, the fakirs, the philosophers, and the saints. A belief in its actuality is the pivot of the Christian position; indeed of every religion worthy of the name. It is the justification of mysticism, asceticism, the whole machinery of the self-renouncing life. That there is an extreme point at which man's nature touches the Absolute: that his ground, or substance, his true being, is penetrated by the Divine Life which constitutes the underlying reality of things; this is the basis on which the whole mystic claim of possible union with God must rest. Here, they say, is our link with reality; and in this place alone can be celebrated the "marriage from which the Lord comes."¹

To use another of their diagrams, it is thanks to the existence within him of this immortal spark from the central fire, that man is implicitly a "child of the infinite." The mystic way must therefore be a life, a discipline, which will so alter the constituents of his mental life as to include this spark within the conscious field; bring it out of the hiddenness, from those deep levels where it sustains and guides his normal existence, and make it the dominant element round which his personality is arranged.

It is clear that under ordinary conditions, and save for sudden gusts of "Transcendental Feeling" induced by some saving madness such as Religion, Art, or Love, the superficial self knows nothing of the attitude of this silent watcher—this "Dweller in the Innermost"—towards the incoming messages of the external world: nor of the activities which they awake in it. Concentrated on the sense-world, and the messages she receives from it, she knows nothing of the relations which exist between this subject and the unattainable Object of all thought. But by a deliberate inattention to the messages of the senses, such as that which is induced by contemplation, the mystic can bring the ground of the soul, the seat of "Transcendental Feeling," within the area of consciousness: making it amenable to the activity of the will. Thus becoming unaware of his usual and largely fictitious "external world," another and more substantial set of perceptions, which never have their chance under normal conditions, rise to the surface. Sometimes these unite with the normal reasoning faculties. More often, they supersede them. Some such exchange, such "losing to find," appears to be necessary, if man's transcendental powers are to have their full chance.

"The two eyes of the soul of man," says the "Theologia

¹ Tauler, Sermon on St. Augustine ("The Inner Way," p. 162).

Germanica," here developing a profound Platonic image, "cannot both perform their work at once: but if the soul shall see with the right eye into eternity, then the left eye must close itself and refrain from working, and be as though it were dead. For if the left eye be fulfilling its office toward outward things; that is, holding converse with time and the creatures; then must the right eye be hindered in its working; that is, in its contemplation. Therefore, whosoever will have the one must let the other go; for 'no man can serve two masters.'"¹

There is within us an immense capacity for perception, for the receiving of messages from outside; and a very little consciousness which deals with them. It is as if one telegraph operator were placed in charge of a multitude of lines: all may be in action, but he can only attend to one at a time. In popular language, there is not enough consciousness to go round. Even upon the sensual plane, no one can be aware of more than a few things at once. These fill the centre of our field of consciousness: as the object on which we happen to have focussed our vision dominates our field of sight. The other matters within that field retreat to the margin. We know, dimly, that they are there; but we pay them no attention and should hardly miss them if they ceased to exist.

Transcendental matters are, for most of us, always beyond the margin; because most of us have given up our whole consciousness to the occupation of the senses, and permitted them to construct there a universe in which we are contented to remain. Only in certain states—recollection, contemplation, ecstasy and their allied conditions—does the self contrive to turn out the usual tenants, shut the "gateways of the flesh," and let those submerged powers which are capable of picking up messages from another plane of being have their turn. Then it is the sense-world which retreats beyond the margin, and another landscape that rushes in. At last, then, we begin to see something of what contemplation does for its initiates. It is one of the many names applied to that chain of processes which have for their object this alteration of the mental equilibrium: the putting to sleep of that "Normal Self" which usually wakes, and the awakening of that "Transcendental Self" which usually sleeps. To man, "meeting-point of various stages of reality," is given—though he seldom considers it—this unique power of choosing his universe.

The phenomenon known as double or disintegrated personality may perhaps give us a hint as to the mechanical nature of the change which contemplation effects. In this psychic malady the total character of the patient is split up; a certain group of quali-

¹ "Theologia Germanica," cap. vii. Compare "De Imitatione Christi," l. iii. cap. 38.

ties are, as it were, abstracted from the surface-consciousness and so closely associated as to form in themselves a complete "character" or "personality"—necessarily poles asunder from the "character" which the self usually shows to the world, since it consists exclusively of those elements which are omitted from it. Thus in the classical case of Miss Beauchamp, the investigator, Dr. Morton Prince, called the three chief "personalities," from their ruling characteristics, "the Saint," "the Woman," and "the Devil." The totality of character which composed the "real Miss Beauchamp" had split up into these contrasting types; each of which was excessive, because withdrawn from the control of the rest. When, voluntarily or involuntarily, the personality which had possession of the field of consciousness was lulled to sleep, one of the others emerged. Hypnotism was one of the means which most easily effected this change.

Now in persons of mystical genius, the qualities which the stress of normal life tends to keep below the threshold of consciousness are of enormous strength. In these natural explorers of Eternity the "transcendental faculty," the "eye of the soul," is not merely present in embryo, but is highly developed; and is combined with great emotional and volitional power. The result of the segregation of such qualities below the threshold of consciousness is to remove from them the friction of those counterbalancing traits in the surface mind with which they might collide. They are "in the hiddenness," as Jacob Boehme would say. There they develop unchecked, until a point is reached at which their strength is such that they break their bounds and emerge into the conscious field: either temporarily dominating the subject as in ecstasy, or permanently transmuting the old self, as in the "unitive life." The attainment of this point may be accelerated by processes which have always been known and valued by the mystics; and which tend to produce a state of consciousness classed by psychologists with dreams, reverie, and the results of hypnosis. In all these the normal surface-consciousness is deliberately or involuntarily lulled, the images and ideas connected with normal life are excluded, and images or faculties from "beyond the threshold" are able to take their place.

Of course these images or faculties may or may not be more valuable than those already present in the surface-consciousness. In the ordinary subject, often enough, they are but the odds and ends for which the superficial mind has found no use. In the mystic, they are of a very different order: and this fact justifies the means which he instinctively employs to secure their emergence. Indian mysticism founds its external system almost wholly

¹ Morton Prince, "The Dissociation of a Personality," p. 16.

on (a) Asceticism, the domination of the senses, and (b) the deliberate practice of self-hypnotization; either by fixing the eyes on a near object, or by the rhythmic repetition of the *mantra* or sacred word. By these complementary forms of discipline, the pull of the phenomenal world is diminished and the mind is placed at the disposal of the subconscious powers. Dancing, music, and other exaggerations of natural rhythm have been pressed into the same service by the Greek initiates of Dionysus, by the Gnostics, by innumerable other mystic cults. That these proceedings do effect a remarkable change in the human consciousness is proved by experience: though how and why they do it is as yet little understood. Such artificial and deliberate production of ecstasy is against the whole instinct of the Christian contemplatives; but here and there amongst them also we find instances in which ecstatic trance or lucidity, the liberation of the "transcendental sense," was inadvertently produced by purely physical means. Thus Jacob Boehme, the "Teutonic theosopher," having one day as he sat in his room "gazed fixedly upon a burnished pewter dish which reflected the sunshine with great brilliance," fell into an inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could look into the principles and deepest foundations of things.¹ The contemplation of running water had the same effect on St. Ignatius Loyola. Sitting on the bank of a river one day, and facing the stream, which was running deep, "the eyes of his mind were opened, not so as to see any kind of vision, but so as to understand and comprehend spiritual things . . . and this with such clearness that for him all these things were made new."² This method of attaining to mental lucidity by a narrowing and simplification of the conscious field, finds an apt parallel in the practice of Immanuel Kant, who "found that he could better engage in philosophical thought while gazing steadily at a neighbouring church steeple."³

It need hardly be said that rationalistic writers, ignoring the parallels offered by the artistic and philosophic temperaments, have seized eagerly upon the evidence afforded by such instances of apparent mono-ideism and self-hypnotization in the lives of the mystics, and by the physical disturbances which accompany the ecstatic trance, and sought by its application to attribute all the abnormal perceptions of contemplative genius to hysteria or other disease. They have not hesitated to call St. Paul an epileptic. St. Teresa the "patron saint of hysterics"; and have found room for most of their spiritual kindred in various departments of the pathological museum. They have been helped in this grateful task by the acknowledged fact that the great contemplatives, though

¹ Martensen, "Jacob Boehme," p. 7.

² Testament, cap. iii.

³ Starbuck, "The Psychology of Religion," p. 388.

almost always persons of robust intelligence and marked practical or intellectual ability—Plotinus, St. Bernard, the two Ss. Catherine, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and the Sūfī poets Jāmi and Jalāl al-Dīn—are cases in point—have often suffered from bad physical health. More, their mystical activities have generally reacted upon their bodies in a definite and special way; producing in several cases a particular kind of illness and of physical disability, accompanied by pains and functional disturbances for which no organic cause could be discovered, unless that cause were the immense strain which exalted spirit puts upon a body which is adapted to a very different form of life.

It is certain that the abnormal and highly sensitized type of mind which we call mystical does frequently, but not always, produce or accompany strange and inexplicable modifications of the physical organism with which it is linked. The supernatural is not here in question, except in so far as we are inclined to give that name to natural phenomena which we do not understand. Such instances of psycho-physical parallelism as the stigmatizations of the saints—and indeed of other suggestible subjects hardly to be ranked as saints—will occur to anyone.¹ I here offer to the reader another less discussed and more extraordinary example of the modifying influence of the spirit on the supposed "laws" of bodily life.

We know, as a historical fact, unusually well attested by contemporary evidence and quite outside the sphere of hagiographic romance, that both St. Catherine of Siena and her namesake St. Catherine of Genoa—active women as well as ecstasies, the first a philanthropist, reformer, and politician, the second an original theologian and for many years the highly efficient matron of a large hospital—lived, in the first case for years, in the second for constantly repeated periods of many weeks, without other food than the consecrated Host which they received at Holy Communion. They did this, not by way of difficult obedience to a pious vow, but because they could not live in any other way. Whilst fasting, they were well and active, capable of dealing with the innumerable responsibilities which filled their lives. But the attempt to eat even a few mouthfuls—and this attempt was constantly repeated, for, like all true saints, they detested eccentricity²—at once made them ill and had to be abandoned as useless.³

¹ See, for instances, Cutten, "The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity," cap. viii.

² "Singularity," says Gertrude More, "is a vice which Thou extremely hatest" ("The Spiritual Exercises of the most virtuous and religious Dame Gertrude More," p. 40). All the best and sanest of the mystics are of the same opinion.

³ See E. Gardner, "St. Catherine of Siena," pp. 12 and 48; and E. von Hügel, "The Mystical Element of Religion," vol. i. p. 135.

In spite of the researches of Murisier,¹ Janet,² Ribot,³ and other psychologists, and their persevering attempts to find a pathological explanation which will fit all mystic facts, this and other marked physical peculiarities which accompany the mystical temperament belong as yet to the unsolved problems of humanity. They need to be removed both from the sphere of marvel and from that of disease—into which enthusiastic friends and foes force them by turn—to the sphere of pure psychology; and there studied dispassionately with the attention which we so willingly bestow on the less interesting eccentricities of degeneracy and vice. Their existence no more discredits the sanity of mysticism or the validity of its results than the unstable nervous condition usually noticed in artists—who share to some extent the mystic's apprehension of the Real—discredits art. "In such cases as Kant and Beethoven," says Von Hügel justly, "a classifier of humanity according to its psycho-physical phenomena alone would put these great discoverers and creators, without hesitation, amongst hopeless and useless hypochondriacs."⁴

In the case of the mystics the disease of hysteria, with its astounding variety of mental symptoms, its strange power of disintegrating, rearranging and enhancing the elements of consciousness, its tendencies to automatism and ecstasy, has been most often invoked to provide an explanation of the observed phenomena. This is as if one sought the source of the genius of Taglioni in the symptoms of St. Vitus's dance. Both the art and the disease have to do with bodily movements. So too both mysticism and hysteria have to do with the domination of consciousness by one fixed and intense idea or intuition, which rules the life and is able to produce amazing physical and psychical results. In the hysteric patient this idea is often trivial or morbid but has become—thanks to the self's unstable mental condition—an obsession. In the mystic the dominant idea is a great one: so great in fact, that when it is received in its completeness by the human consciousness, almost of necessity it ousts all else. It is nothing less than the idea or perception of the transcendent reality and presence of God. Hence the mono-idealism of the mystic is rational, whilst that of the hysteric patient is invariably irrational.

On the whole then, whilst psycho-physical relations remain so little understood, it would seem more prudent, and certainly more scientific, to withhold our judgment on the meaning of the psycho-

¹ "Les Maladies des Sentiments Religieux."

² "L'État Mental des Hystériques," and "Une Extatique" (*Bulletin de l'Institut Psychologique*, 1901).

³ "La Psychologie des Sentiments," 1896.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 42.

⁵ For examples consult Pierre Janet, *op. cit.*

physical phenomena which accompany the mystic life; instead of basing destructive criticism on facts which are avowedly mysterious and at least capable of more than one interpretation. To deduce the nature of a compound from the character of its by-products is notoriously unsafe.

Our bodies are animal things, made for animal activities. When a spirit of unusual ardour insists on using its nerve-cells for other activities, they kick against the pricks; and inflict, as the mystics themselves acknowledge, the penalty of "mystical ill-health." "Believe me, children," says Tauler, "one who would know much about these high matters would often have to keep his bed, for his bodily frame could not support it."¹ "I cause thee extreme pain of body," says the voice of Love to Mechthild of Magdeburg. "If I gave myself to thee as often as thou wouldst have me, I should deprive myself of the sweet shelter I have of thee in this world, for a thousand bodies could not protect a loving soul from her desire. Therefore the higher the love the greater the pain."²

On the other hand the exalted personality of the mystic—his self-discipline, his heroic acceptance of labour and suffering, and his inflexible will—raises to a higher term that normal power of mind over body which all possess. Also the contemplative state—like the hypnotic state in a healthy person—seems to enhance life by throwing open deeper levels of personality. The self then drinks at a fountain which is fed by the Universal Life. True ecstasy is notoriously life-enhancing. In it a bracing contact with Reality seems to take place, and as a result the subject is himself more real. Often, says St. Teresa, even the sick come forth from ecstasy healthy and with new strength; for something great is then given to the soul.³ Contact has been set up with levels of being which the daily routine of existence leaves untouched. Hence the extraordinary powers of endurance, and independence of external conditions, which the great ecstasies so often display.

If we see in the mystics, as some have done, the sporadic beginning of a power, a higher consciousness, towards which the race slowly tends; then it seems likely enough that where it appears nerves and organs should suffer under a stress to which they have not yet become adapted, and that a spirit more highly organized than its bodily home should be able to impose strange conditions on the flesh. When man first stood upright, a body long accustomed to go on all fours, legs which had adjusted themselves to bearing but half his weight, must have rebelled against this

¹ Sermon for First Sunday after Easter (Winkworth, p. 302).

² "Das Fließende Licht der Gottheit," pt. ii. cap. xxv.

³ *Vida*, cap. xx. § 29.

unnatural proceeding; inflicting upon its author much pain and discomfort if not absolute illness. It is at least permissible to look upon the strange "psycho-physical" state common amongst the mystics as just such a rebellion on the part of a normal nervous and vascular system against the exigencies of a way of life to which it has not yet adjusted itself.¹

In spite of such rebellion, and of the tortures to which it has subjected them, the mystics, oddly enough, are a long-lived race: an awkward fact for critics of the physiological school. To take only a few instances from amongst marked ecstasies, St. Hildegard lived to be eighty-one, Mechthild of Magdeburg to eighty-seven, Ruysbroeck to eighty-eight, Suso to seventy, St. Teresa to sixty-seven, St. Catherine of Genoa and St. Peter of Alcantara to sixty-three. It seems as though that enhanced life which is the reward of mystical surrender enabled them to triumph over their bodily disabilities; and to live and do the work demanded of them under conditions which would have incapacitated ordinary men.

Such triumphs, which take heroic rank in the history of the human mind, have been accomplished as a rule in the same way. Like all intuitive persons, all possessors of genius, all potential artists—with whom in fact they are closely related—the mystics have, in psychological language, "thresholds of exceptional mobility." That is to say, a slight effort, a slight departure from normal conditions, will permit their latent or "subliminal" powers to emerge and occupy the mental field. A "mobile threshold" may make a man a genius, a lunatic, or a saint. All depends upon the character of the emerging powers. In the great mystic, these powers, these tracts of personality lying below the level of normal consciousness, are of unusual richness; and cannot be accounted for in terms of pathology. "If it be true," says Delacroix, "that the great mystics have not wholly escaped those nervous blemishes which mark nearly all exceptional organizations, there is in them a vital and creative power, a constructive logic, an extended scale of realization—in a word, a genius—which is, in truth, their essential quality. . . . The great mystics, creators and inventors who have found a new form of life and have justified it . . . join, upon the highest summits of the human spirit, the great simplifiers of the world."²

The truth, then, so far as we know it at present, seems to be

¹ Boyce Gibson ("God with Us," cap. iii.) has drawn a striking parallel between the ferment and "interior uproar" of adolescence and the profound disturbances which mark man's entry into a conscious spiritual life. His remarks are even more applicable to the drastic rearrangement of personality which takes place in the case of the mystic, whose spiritual life is more intense than that of other men.

² Delacroix, "Études sur le Mysticisme," p. iii.

that those powers which are in contact with the Transcendental Order, and which constitute at the lowest estimate half the self, are dormant in ordinary men; whose time and interest are wholly occupied in responding to the stimuli of the world of sense. With those latent powers sleeps the landscape which they alone can apprehend. In mystics none of the self is always dormant. They have roused the Dweller in the Innermost from its slumbers, and round it have unified their life. Heart, Reason, Will are there in full action, drawing their incentive not from the shadow-show of sense, but from the depths of true Being; where a lamp is lit, and a consciousness awake, of which the sleepy crowd remains oblivious. He who says the mystic is but half a man, states the exact opposite of the truth. Only the mystic can be called a whole man, since in others half the powers of the self always sleep. This wholeness of experience is much insisted on by the mystics. Thus the Divine Voice says to St. Catherine of Siena, "I have also shown thee the Bridge and the three general steps, placed there for the three powers of the soul; and I have told thee how no one can attain to the life of grace unless he has mounted all three steps, that is, gathered together all the three powers of the soul in My Name."³

In those abnormal types of personality to which we give the name of genius, we seem to detect a hint of the relations which may exist between these deep levels of being and the crust of consciousness. In the poet, the musician, the great mathematician or inventor, powers lying below the threshold, and hardly controllable by their owner's conscious will, clearly take a major part in the business of perception and conception. In all creative acts, the larger share of the work is done subconsciously: its emergence is in a sense automatic. This is equally true of mystics, artists, philosophers, discoverers, and rulers of men. The great religion, invention, work of art, always owes its inception to some sudden uprush of intuitions or ideas for which the superficial self cannot account; its execution to powers so far beyond the control of that self, that they seem, as their owner sometimes says, to "come from beyond." This is "inspiration"; the opening of the sluices, so that those waters of truth in which all life is bathed may rise to the level of consciousness.

The great teacher, poet, artist, inventor, never aims deliberately at his effects. He obtains them he knows not how: perhaps from a contact of which he is unconscious with that creative plane of being which the Sūfis call the Constructive Spirit, and the Kabalists Yesod, and which both postulate as lying next behind the world of sense. "Sometimes," said the great Alexandrian Jew Philo,

³ Dialogo, cap. lxxviii.

"when I have come to my work empty, I have suddenly become full; ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon me, and implanted in me from on high; so that through the influence of divine inspiration, I have become greatly excited, and have known neither the place in which I was, nor those who were present, nor myself, nor what I was saying, nor what I was writing; for then I have been conscious of a richness of interpretation, an enjoyment of light, a most penetrating insight, a most manifest energy in all that was to be done; having such an effect on my mind as the clearest ocular demonstration would have on the eyes."¹ This is a true creative ecstasy, strictly parallel to the state in which the mystic performs his mighty works.

To let oneself go, be quiet, receptive, appears to be the condition under which such contact with the Cosmic Life may be obtained. "I have noticed that when one paints one should think of nothing: everything then comes better," says the young Raphael to Leonardo da Vinci.² The superficial self must here acknowledge its own insufficiency, must become the humble servant of a more profound and vital consciousness. The mystics are of the same opinion. "Let the will quietly and wisely understand," says St. Teresa, "that it is not by dint of labour on our part that we can converse to any good purpose with God."³ "The best and noblest way in which thou mayest come into this Life," says Eckhart, "is by keeping silence and letting God work and speak. Where all the powers are withdrawn from their work and images, there is this word spoken . . . the more thou canst draw in all thy powers and forget the creature the nearer art thou to this, and the more receptive."⁴

Thus Boehme says to the neophyte,⁵ "When both thy intellect and will are quiet and passive to the expressions of the eternal Word and Spirit, and when thy soul is winged up above that which is temporal, the outward senses and the imagination being locked up by holy abstraction, *then* the eternal Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking will be revealed in thee. Blessed art thou therefore if thou canst stand still from self thinking and self willing, and canst stop the wheel of thy imagination and senses." Then, the conscious mind being passive, the more divine mind below the threshold—organ of our free creative life—can emerge and present its reports. In the words of an older mystic, "The soul, leaving all things and forgetting herself, is immersed in the ocean

¹ Quoted by James ("Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 481) from Clissold's "The Prophetic Spirit in Genius and Madness," p. 67.

² Mèrejowsky, "Le Roman de Leonard de Vinci," p. 638.

³ Vida, cap. xv. 9.

⁴ Meister Eckhart, Pred. i. ("Mystische Schriften," p. 18).

⁵ "Three Dialogues of the Supersensual Life," p. 14.

of Divine Splendour, and illuminated by the Sublime Abyss of the Unfathomable Wisdom."¹

The "passivity" of contemplation, then, is a necessary preliminary of spiritual energy: an essential clearing of the ground. It withdraws the tide of consciousness from the shores of sense, stops the "wheel of the imagination." "The Soul," says Eckhart again, "is created in a place between Time and Eternity: with its highest powers it touches Eternity, with its lower Time."² These, the worlds of Being and Becoming, are the two "stages of reality" which meet in the spirit of man. By cutting us off from the temporal plane, the lower kind of reality, Contemplation gives the eternal plane, and the powers which can communicate with that plane, their chance. In the born mystic these powers are great, and lie very near the normal threshold of consciousness. He has a genius for transcendental—or as he would say, divine—discovery in much the same way as his cousins, the born musician and poet, have a genius for musical or poetic discovery. In all three cases, the emergence of these higher powers is mysterious, and not least so to those who experience it. Psychology on the one hand, theology on the other, may offer us diagrams and theories of this proceeding: of the strange oscillations of the developing consciousness, the fitful visitations of a lucidity and creative power over which the self has little or no control, the raptures and griefs of a vision by turns granted and withdrawn. But the secret of genius still eludes us, as the secret of life eludes the biologist.

The utmost we can say of such persons is, that reality presents itself to them under abnormal conditions and in abnormal terms, and that subject to these conditions and in these terms they are bound to deal with it. Thanks to their peculiar mental make up, one aspect of the universe is for them focussed so sharply that in comparison with it all other images are blurred, vague, and unreal. Hence the sacrifice which men of genius—mystics, artists, inventors—make of their whole lives to this one Object, this one vision of truth, is not self-denial, but rather self-fulfilment. They gather themselves up from the unreal, in order to concentrate on the real. The whole personality then absorbs or enters into communion with certain rhythms or harmonies existent in the universe, which the receiving apparatus of other selves cannot take up. "Here is the finger of God, a flash of the Will that can!" exclaims Abt Vogler, as the sounds grow under his hand. "The numbers

¹ Dionysius the Areopagite, "De Divinis Nominibus," vii. 3.

² Pred. xliii. Eckhart obtained this image from St. Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Contra Gentiles," I. iii. cap. lxi. "The intellectual soul is created on the confines of eternity and time."

came!" says the poet. He knows not how; certainly not by deliberate intellection.

So it is with the mystic. Madame Guyon states in her autobiography, that when she was composing her works she would experience a sudden and irresistible inclination to take up her pen; though feeling wholly incapable of literary composition, and not even knowing the subject on which she would be impelled to write. If she resisted this impulse it was at the cost of the most intense discomfort. She would then begin to write with extraordinary swiftness; words, elaborate arguments, and appropriate quotations coming to her without reflection, and so quickly that one of her longest books was written in one and a half days. "In writing I saw that I was writing of things which I had never seen: and during the time of this manifestation, I was given light to perceive that I had in me treasures of knowledge and understanding which I did not know that I possessed."¹

Similar statements are made of St. Teresa, who declared that in writing her books she was powerless to set down anything but that which her Master put into her mind.² So Blake said of "Milton" and "Jerusalem," "I have written the poems from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation and even against my will. The time it has taken in writing was thus rendered non-existent, and an immense poem exists which seems to be the labour of a long life, all produced without labour or study."³

These are, of course, extreme forms of that strange power of automatic composition, in which words and characters arrive and arrange themselves in defiance of their authors' will, of which most poets and novelists possess a trace. Such composition is probably related to the automatic writing of "mediums" and other sensitives; in which the often disorderly and incoherent subliminal mind seizes upon this channel of expression. The subliminal mind of the great mystic, however, is not disorderly. It is abnormally sensitive, richly endowed and keenly observant—a treasure house, not a lumber room—and becomes, in the course of its education, a highly disciplined and skilled instrument of knowledge. When, therefore, its contents emerge, and are presented to the normal consciousness in the form of lucidity, "auditions," visions, automatic writing, or any other translations of the super-

¹ Vie, t. ii. pp. 120, 223, 229. It might reasonably be objected that Madame Guyon does not rank high among the mystics and her later history includes some unfortunate incidents. This is true. Nevertheless she exhibits such a profusion of mystical phenomena and is so candid in her self-disclosures, that she provides much valuable material for the student.

² G. Cunningham Graham, "Santa Teresa," vol. i. p. 202.

³ "Letters of William Blake," April 28, 1803.

sensible into the terms of sensible perception, they cannot be discredited because the worthless unconscious region of feeble natures sometimes manifests itself in the same way. Idiots are often voluble; but many orators are sane.

Now, to sum up: what are the chief characteristics which we have found to concern us in this sketch-map of the mental life of man?

(1) We have divided that life, arbitrarily enough, along the fluctuating line which psychologists call the "threshold of his consciousness" into the surface life and the unconscious deeps.

(2) In the surface life, though we recognized its essential wholeness, we distinguished three outstanding and ever-present aspects: the Trinity in Unity of feeling, thought, and will. Amongst these, we were obliged to give the primacy to feeling, as the power which set the machinery of thought and will to work.

(3) We have seen that the expression of this life takes the two complementary forms of *conation*, or outgoing action, and *cognition*, or indwelling knowledge; and that the first, which is dynamic in type, is largely the work of the will stimulated by the emotions; whilst the second, which is passive in type, is the business of the intellect. They answer to the two main aspects which man discerns in the universal life: Being and Becoming.

(4) Neither conation nor cognition—action nor thought—as performed by this surface mind, concerned as it is with natural existence and dominated by spatial conceptions, is able to set up any relations with the Absolute or transcendental world. Such action and thought deal wholly with material supplied directly or indirectly by the world of sense. The testimony of the mystics, however, and of all persons possessing an "instinct for the Absolute," points to the existence of a further faculty—indeed, a deeper self—in man; a self which the circumstances of diurnal life usually keep "below the threshold" of his consciousness, and which thus becomes one of the factors of his "subliminal life." This hidden self is the primary agent of mysticism, and lives a "substantial" life in touch with the real or transcendental world.¹

(5) Certain processes, of which contemplation has been taken as a type, can so alter the state of consciousness as to permit the emergence of this deeper self; which, according as it enters more or less into the conscious life, makes man more or less a mystic.

¹ This insistence on the twofold character of human personality is implicit in the mystics. "It is," says Brémont, "the fundamental dogma of mystical psychology—the distinction between the two selves; *Animus*, the surface self; *Anima*, the deep self; *Animus*, rational knowledge; and *Anima*, mystical or poetic knowledge. . . . the I, who feeds on notions and words, and enchants him self by doing so; the Me, who is united to realities" (Brémont "Prière et Poésie," cap. xii.)

The mystic life, therefore, involves the emergence from deep levels of man's transcendental self; its capture of the field of consciousness; and the "conversion" or rearrangement of his feeling, thought, and will—his character—about this new centre of life.

We state, then, as the conclusion of this chapter, that the object of the mystic's adventure, seen from within, is the apprehension of, or direct communion with, that transcendental Reality which we tried in the last section to define from without. Here, as in the fulfilment of the highest earthly love, knowledge and communion are the same thing; we must be "oned with bliss" if we are to be aware of it. That aspect of our being by which we may attain this communion—that "marrow of the Soul," as Ruysbroeck calls it—usually lies below the threshold of our consciousness; but in certain natures of abnormal richness and vitality, and under certain favourable conditions, it may be liberated by various devices, such as contemplation. Once it has emerged, however, it takes up, to help it in the work, aspects of the conscious self. The surface must co-operate with the deeps, and at last merge with those deeps to produce that unification of consciousness upon high levels which alone can put a term to man's unrest. The heart that longs for the All, the mind that conceives it, the will that concentrates the whole self upon it, must all be called into play. The self must be surrendered: but it must not be annihilated, as some Quietists have supposed. It only dies that it may live again. Supreme success,—the permanent assurance of the mystic that "we are more verily in heaven than in earth,"—says the Lady Julian, in a passage which anticipates the classification of modern psychology, "cometh of the natural Love of our soul, and of the clear light of our Reason, and of the steadfast Mind."¹

But what is the order of precedence which these three activities are to assume in the work which is *one*? All, as we have seen, must do their part; for we are concerned with the response of man in his wholeness to the overwhelming attraction of God. But which shall predominate? The ultimate nature of the self's experience of reality will depend on the answer she gives to this question. What, here, are the relative values of Mind and Heart? Which will bring her closest to the Thought of God; the real life in which she is bathed? Which, fostered and made dominant, is most likely to put her in harmony with the Absolute? The Love of God, which is ever in the heart and often on the lips of the Saints, is the passionate desire for this harmony; the "malady of thought" is its intellectual equivalent. Though we may seem to escape God, we cannot escape some form of this craving; except at the price of utter stagnation.

¹ Julian of Norwich, "Revelations of Divine Love," cap. iv.

We go back, therefore, to the statement with which this chapter opened: that of the two governing desires which share the prison of the self. We see them now as representing the cravings of the intellect and the emotions for the only end of all quests. The disciplined will—the "conative power"—with all the dormant faculties which it can wake and utilize, can come to the assistance of one of them. Which? The question is a crucial one; for the destiny of the self depends on the partner which the will selects.

I

I SAW the Body and Soul conversing and arguing with one another. And the Soul said: God made me to love and to be happy. I should like, then, to start out on a voyage to discover what I am drawn to. Come willingly with me, for you too will share my joy. We shall travel throughout the world together; if I find what pleases me I shall enjoy it. You will do the same; and he who finds more will be most happy.

BODY

Since I am subject to you, I will do as you wish;
remember, though, that without me you cannot do what you wish.
let us, therefore, understand each other at the outset;
in this way we shall have no arguments.
Once I have found what gives me joy, please keep your word.
I would not want to hear you grumble,
muttering that you want to go elsewhere
or insisting on looking for what interests you.
To do away with that possibility,
let us invite a third party to come along,
someone to resolve any differences we might have
—a just and unselfish person.

SOUL

Very well. Who will the third person be?

CATHERINE OF GENOA

BODY

Self-Love.

He will give the body its due and share the
body's joys.

He will do the same with you;
and so each of us will have what is meet and
proper.

SOUL

And if we were to come across food we would
both enjoy,
what then?

BODY

Then he who can eat more will do so,
provided there is enough for two.
If that is not the case, Self-Love will give to
each his due.

Considering our naturally different tastes,
however,
it would be remarkable
if we came across food we both enjoyed.

SOUL

Very well.
I am not afraid of being won over to your
preferences,
since by nature of the two I am the stronger.

BODY

True, you are the stronger of the two, but I am
at home here.
There are many things here that I enjoy.
It will be easier for me to convert you to my
preferences, I think,
than vice versa.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

The things that give you joy
are not visible nor do they have any taste.

SOUL

Let us start out, then.
Each of us will have one week to do what he
will—
as long as we do not offend our Creator,
something I will not do as long as I live.
Should I die—that is, if you have me offend
God
—I will do all that you ask, be your servant, do
your will,
take delight in what gives you delight.
Bound each to each,
we shall never again be separated in this world
or the next,
but be together in good and evil.
Free Will will not loosen this bond.
Should I triumph over you, naturally you
would act the same.

Agreed on this, the Body and the Soul set out in search of
Self-Love. Having found him, they informed him of what
they had concluded, and Self-Love commented:

SELF-LOVE

I am delighted to join you
and have no doubt that I will feel at home with
you.
I will indeed give to each his due, and fairly.
Should one of you seek to win me over,
I in turn would favor the other.

The Body and the Soul answered that they would gladly
travel all together and accept his judgment—with the

CATHERINE OF GENOA

proviso that no offense be given to God, and should any of them sin the other two would reprove him. The Soul then suggested that they start out and said:

Let me, since I am the more worthy, start with
the first week.

BODY

I accept.
Act according to reason
and within those limits that Self-Love approves.

Now the Soul, still free from sin, began by taking thought on its creation, on all the benefits God had given it, on how it had been created for eternal bliss, and how, in worth, it was higher than the choirs of angels. It understood that it was almost divine by nature for, drawn to contemplation of things divine, it wanted to eat its bread with that of the angels. And so the Soul said to itself:

Just as I am not visible,
so I want my joy, my food, to be in things
invisible.
That is what I was created for,
and in that I will find rest.
Spending the first week in contemplation
and looking down on things below,
I will make my way up to the heavens.
No other work interests me
—let him who finds joy in this do so,
and may others be patient.

And so for one week the Soul spent his time in contemplation, much to the discomfort of the Body and Self-Love. When the week was up, the Soul said:

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

I have done my part, now you do yours.
Tell me, how did you find the week?

They answered that it was not to their taste, that not only did they feel little joy that week, but indeed thought they were going to die. (They hoped, however, to avenge themselves.) And so the Body said to the Soul:

Come with me.
Now let me show you how many things God has
done for me.

He showed the Soul the heavens with its ornaments, and the earth, the sea, the air with its birds, all the kingdoms, dominions, cities, provinces, spiritual and temporal, great treasures and songs and music, as well as all sorts of food for the nourishment of the Body; in a word, all the joys the Body could experience. These goods would not be lacking as long as they were in this world, and since they were created for the Body they could be enjoyed without offending God. And the Body added:

Though you did not show me your beloved
country,
I will show you mine.
For unless you share my joy,
I know that I cannot have what I wish.
I remember the agreement—let me remind you
of it.
If you intended to go
and take residence in your beloved country
and leave me to starve in mine I would die.
The responsibility would be yours,
and so would the offense to God.
Self-Love and I would point that out

CATHERINE OF GENOA

Now, and this is an advantage I have over you,
I can enjoy all of these joys and pleasures
as long as I live.
When the end comes,
and should I be saved, as I earnestly wish to be,
I will then go on to enjoy your beloved country.
It is to my advantage, then, that you save your-
self;
and please do not think
that I seek for anything contrary to God or rea-
son.
Ask my friend, Self-Love, if that is not so.

And Self-Love answered:

In both instances, your motives and reasons ap-
pear quite sensible.
In charity, though,
each of you has gone outside the limits of the
reasonable.
God asks that we love our neighbor as ourselves,
and you, Soul, were so little concerned
with the needs of the Body and of me
that we were in danger of death.
Learn to moderate yourself,
to take into account the needs
of your neighbor, the Body, and me as well—
for I, too, could not live in your beloved country.

Then, turning to the Body, Self-Love added:

As for you, you have shown the Soul many
superfluous things.
Remember that all that which is superfluous
harms you as much as the Soul,

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

and that is true even if the Soul may not
recognize it.
If we live according to our needs
we can live happily together.
If you heed my words I will continue to stay
with you
and, with discretion, we will share common joys.
Otherwise, I will leave.
If you, the Soul, wish to be helped by the Body,
keep in mind that the Body has its needs;
if you ignore them it will protest.
Meet those needs
and it will be at peace with itself and with you.

The Soul answered:

To attend to the body's needs to such an extent
gives me pause.
I am afraid that I, too, will begin to find delight
in them
and, unaware of the danger, will settle for them.
Watching you and the Body
so hungry and so intent on what gives you joy,
I sense that I too will become earthbound.
The goods of the earth
do not lead to an increased taste for spiritual
things.
(Help me, O God!)

BODY

As far as I am concerned, it seems to me
that Self-Love has spoken very well of our
respective needs.
We should continue to stay together.

CATHERINE OF GENOA

As far as your fears are concerned, remember
that if the things that God created could harm
the Soul,
He would not have created them.
The will, moreover, is strong.
It has been created such
that it can only be impeded by itself.
God Himself does not coerce it.
This is why it is in your power
to grant or refuse what we ask of you,
and when and where it pleases you.
The reins are in your hands.
Give to each according to his needs
and pay no heed to the grumblers.

SOUL

Tell me, precisely
what are the needs that you claim you cannot
do without?
I will then provide for them and in that way
no longer be fearful.

BODY

My needs are food, drink, sleep, dress.
That is, to be served in one way or another
so that, in turn, I can serve you.
In attending to your spiritual needs, however,
do not vex me.
When I am disgruntled, I cannot attend to
those needs.
If God provided so many delightful things for
me, the Body,
think of what he may have in store for you, the
immortal Soul!

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

We can both do homage to God in this
manner—
and when we have our differences
Self-Love will settle them.

SOUL

Very well.
Since I cannot do otherwise, I will provide for
your needs.
I am afraid, though, that you are both plotting
against me.
Your words are so utterly sensible on the
surface
that they force me to be understanding;
yet, I wonder what you have in mind
when you insist that without me you can do
nothing.
(Still, if this is a trap, please God, I shall
escape.)
Let us, then, to the honor of God, go on with
our voyage.

Now as they went about the world, each attending to his
own affairs, and seeking joy in what was most proper for
him, the Soul took another week for itself. This time,
however, it fared very differently from the first time. Its
companions kept insisting on their needs, broke up the
allotted time into little pieces, and in general brought the
Soul down to their level.

To give up the contemplation of things divine in
order to provide for animal needs greatly upset the Soul.
The difference between its first week and this one, it felt,
was the difference between black and white.

It was then the body's turn to take a week for itself.

CATHERINE OF GENOA

Because of the Soul's imposed fasts it was starving. Anticipating other such rigors in the future, the Body thought of fortifying itself. It acted resolutely and all the more so since the Soul, incapable of achieving the freedom of its first week, was adapting itself to the needs of the others. So whereas the Soul had had half a week for its needs, which had become weaker, the Body had a full week for itself.

The Soul then said to Self-Love:

In meeting your needs,
I notice that bit by bit my own convictions are
weakening.
Are you not getting more than your due?
And in following you am I not going to be badly
hurt?
Indeed not I alone, but all three of us? -
You are the arbiter. What do you think?

Self-Love answered:

It is because you were aiming so unreasonably
high
that you feel as if you are debasing yourself
to come down to our level.
With time, though, you will learn to moderate
yourself,
to be more sensible.
Our company is not so bad as you seem to think
at this point.
Fear not, God will provide.
You are to love God fully, not in this world but
in the next.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

Take what you can get, and on the best available terms.

SOUL

I see now that I have no defense against the two of you.
You are at home in the world.
Of what use is my week to me when you so insist on your needs that there is no room for mine?
When it is your turn you want your week free and clear;
but when my turn comes up, you find a thousand things to object to.
Since I can only get the worst of this arrangement,
I think it better to give up the idea of individual weeks.
Let each one of us find what is to his taste and live there where he is happiest.
I will deal as courteously as I can with you, of course,
for I know how to do no other.

Content with the suggestion, the two accepted the proposal, saying to the Soul: Now each of us can live in peace, since you have recognized your errors.

And so once more they went about the world, one finding some things that gave him joy, the other doing the same. But the Body, moving around in his own country, found more and more things he considered necessary. Each day those appetites increased. The more the Body and Self-Love, especially the latter, insisted on them, the

CATHERINE OF GENOA

more the three became inseparable. All things seemed equally necessary and reasonable. If the Soul occasionally hesitated, the other two protested that they were being wronged; so that gradually the Soul found itself adrift on the limitless sea of earthly goods. Worldly pleasures and joys were all they would talk about. If the Soul happened to think of spiritual things and allude to them, it met with such criticism that it quickly ceased doing so and said to itself unhappily:

If I keep accompanying the Body and Self-Love,
how will I ever escape them?
In the name of their needs,
they will do whatever they wish with me.

Nonetheless, intent on not yielding to melancholy and nostalgia for the goods for which it was created, the Soul sought peace and joy where it could. And listing with the wind, it said:

The beauty and goodness and joy of created
things
are means for knowing and enjoying things di-
vine.

(Once it had tasted those joys, however, it asked itself:

And yet, what must heavenly things be like?)

As the days passed, however, the Soul lost more and more of its instinct for things divine. It too, like the Body, found satisfaction in the food of pigs and animals. All three were getting along magnificently together.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

Now as they fared forth all happy and united, with the word of dissent, you can well imagine what the word of higher reason! No one spoke of it; their conversation was all for terrestrial goods. Spiritual matters had become so distasteful to them that they no longer spoke or dared to hear of them out of fear that that might mar their joy. Only occasionally did the Soul feel a slight bent her joys and that occurred usually with thoughts of death. Once the fear of death was gone, however, so was occasional prompting.

There was only one drawback to their situation: Although all three satisfied their appetites as best they could, still they ran into difficulties. Because of its capacity for the infinite, the Soul could not satisfy itself with earthly things; and the more it strained to do so, the further it moved away from the peace and rest that it sought. Nonetheless, the Soul, blinded by terrestrial joys, continued to try to satiate itself, to find the rest it sought. Where on earth did it find what it sought and that satisfaction was the ordinance of God. (Were man to find peace on earth, few souls would be saved. The Soul could transform itself into earth and there would rest.) And because the Body is united to the Soul, that Soul and terrestrial things do not fully satisfy, the Body cannot give the Soul as much joy as it would wish to receive. For the Body, the Soul, once its needs are met, remains satisfied. The Body's needs, on the other hand, can be met but its appetites are constantly renewed because, for the Soul, the capacity of the Body is for finite pleasures.

Both Body and Soul, therefore, were in distress. The Soul, because its instinct for infinite joy was hampered by being forced into a vase that was so small that it easily overflowed. The Body, for its part, acted as if creation were not big enough to satisfy its appetites. It

CATHERINE OF GENOA

smarted under the protests of the Soul; and the more it strained to satiate itself, the less it succeeded.

The Soul, as a consequence, said to Self-Love:

Do you see how badly off we both are?
In having me yield to your appetites
you have made me quite sick,
and nowhere—neither on earth nor in heaven—
can I find the food I need.
And how do you fare? What should we do?

SELF-LOVE

You are indeed unhappy, both of you.
I think, though, that we should press on.
We may yet find some food good for all of us.
As for me, I need more than the Body.
Even if I cannot have my fill, at one sitting
I can eat what the Body would consider
sufficient for a year.
What, then, must your problem be,
you whose capacity goes so far beyond mine!
If we come across food that will satisfy us
more than that which we have found up to this
point,
we will let the Body have what is its due;
and if it wants to complain, let it complain.

SOUL

But how can we come across food good for the
two of us?
Is your food celestial or terrestrial?

SELF-LOVE

I am not very choosy. One or the other will do.
The important thing

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

is that we do not return to where you started
your first week.
I feel fine anywhere else.
I am a social being
and if there is enough to get by for all of us, I
am happy.
I manage to put aside enough
so that my friends and followers
do not lack needed comforts.
Indeed, I see to it that my friends are very
well-off.

SOUL

Yet I know that in this world
there is no food that appeals equally to the two
of us.
We left heaven, where my food is found, very
far behind.
Will I ever find my way back to it?
The day that we satisfied ourselves with
worldly pleasures,
God closed those doors to us,
leaving us at the mercy of our appetites.
Confused and virtually desperate, we turn to
Him now
because of the use we can make of Him
rather than out of pure charity as He would
rather have us do.
When I consider what I have lost in following
you,
I almost despair.
I justly deserve to be despised by God,
by you, by hell, and by the world.
In following you, who I thought could help me
in my needs,
I have become a thing of this world.

CATHERINE OF GENOA

I have never found the peace I sought,
though possessing all that I asked for on earth;
and all your appetites and joys heightened my
restlessness.

Still, I persisted in my confusion,
hoping in a worldly future that would satisfy
my craving.

In acceding to the desires of the Body, under
the guise of necessity
—a notion that led straightaway to that of the
necessity of the superfluous—
in a very short time I became enmeshed in sin.
I became arid and heavy, a thing of the earth.
The appetites and food of the Body and of Self-

Love were mine;
and you, Self-Love,
had so tightly bound yourself to me and the
Body
that I almost suffocated.

In my blindness the only good left to me,
remorse, did not work in me long.
I continued to lose myself in things that gave
me shame,
and as I moved further and further away from
God,
my unhappiness grew proportionately.
I sighed with longing, not knowing what it was
I sought—

and that was the prompting, the instinct for
God,
that was mine by nature.

God, who is all good, does not abandon His
creatures.

He often sends them a sign or a word
that, if man pays heed, will help him,
and if he refuses his condition will be worse yet.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

Thus, in my ingratitude I deepened my sin,
taking pleasure in it and even boasting of it.
The more grace I received,
the more blinded and desperate I became.
Had God not come to my aid I would have
perished.

Wretched me, who is to save me but God
alone?

Thus, after allowing the Soul to exhaust itself in a vain quest, God illumined it. The Soul realized its errors, the dangers it had fallen into, and that God alone could free it. Fully conscious at this point of the spiritual and bodily death confronting it, of having become like an animal willingly led to slaughter, the Soul was overcome with fright. Turning to God as best it could it said:

Domine fac ut videam lumen,
so that I may escape the snares of my enemies.

The Soul placed all its trust in God, let Him do what He would. From this time on, the Soul said:

I consider all that befalls me, except sin,
as coming from the hand of God.
Sin is mine alone just as is all concern with the
self.

On seeing the creature lose all confidence in itself and turn to Him, God comes to his aid. He is ready to knock at the door of the Soul, and when it is opened to Him He enters within and casts out all his enemies and restores to His creature its original innocence. He does this in diverse ways, as He sees fit. In this instance we will speak of how He does so with Pure Love.

* * *

CATHERINE OF GENOA

God illumines us with that love which has no need of us and which sustains us even though many of us, considering our inclination to evil, may rightfully be considered his enemies. Our sins, as long as we are in this world, do not ever make Him so wrathful that He ceases to do us good. Indeed, the more distance our sins put between us and God, the more insistent His call to us not to turn our backs on Him. He loves us and will not ever leave off doing us good. He does so in so many ways that the creature may well ask: Who am I that God has no concern but me?

God shows the creature that Pure Love in which He created it, the same love that brought into being the angels and Adam, a pure and intense love with which He wishes to be loved.

(In making the creature subject to Him, God assured that man, given the excellence of his body and soul, might not consider himself God; that is why He gave man a sense of dependence.)

This love pointed to the greater good yet for which man was created: the return, body and soul, of the creature to his celestial home.

After this, God had the creature realize the wretchedness of sin, against which there was no defense save the love of God. He also showed the creature in a short-lived vision the flaming love of Christ, from His incarnation to His ascension, His work in freeing us from eternal damnation, and how the soul of man was free and subject to God.

God also showed the creature how patiently His love waited, how He abhorred many sins; for had the soul died then and there it would have been perpetually damned.

Her soul, he showed her, had come close to death. He alone in the gentlest of ways had saved her, acting on her with such tender affection that she was virtually forced to do His will.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

For God is terrible only in dealing with sin, since in His presence there cannot be the slightest stain. Sin and sin alone is the object of God's hatred, for it prevents His love from transforming us.

In this life, but not in its aftermath, that flaming love never ceases, no matter what the sins of man. That merciful love, Catherine saw, penetrates as deep as hell. Although man merits limitless pain in an infinite time, God's mercy puts a limit not to the time but to the suffering.

In this world, the rays of God's love, unbeknownst to man, encircle man all about, hungrily seeking to penetrate him. When barred, when the soul damns itself, it is almost as if that voice were to say, "Such is the love I bear this soul that I would never wish to leave it."

Once the soul is emptied of love, however, it becomes as evil as love is gentle. I say almost, for God still shows it some mercy.

* * *

This soul [Catherine] witnessed many other signs of God's love that are beyond telling.

A ray of God's love wounded her heart, making her soul experience a flaming love arising from the divine fount. At that instant, she was outside of herself, beyond intellect, tongue, or feeling. Fixed in that pure and divine love, henceforth she never ceased to dwell on it.

She was also made to understand the extent of her ingratitude and mirrored herself in her sins; and she was overcome with such despair and self-loathing that she was tempted to publicly confess her sins. And Catherine's soul cried out, "O Lord, no more world, no more sins!"

She did not view sins principally as sins but as offenses against the goodness of God, His strong love. It was the consciousness of that that made her turn against

CATHERINE OF GENOA

herself, and do her utmost to translate that love into deeds.

In this resolve, the ray of God so united her to Him that from this time on no force or passion could separate them from one another. In witness of this union, some three days later, when she had not yet confessed, she felt the pull of Holy Communion, which from that day on never left her. No priest or friar objected to this need, the daily reception of the Blessed Sacrament, for such was the will of God.

Having witnessed these many signs of the intensity and purity of God's love, the Soul paused and said to the Body and to Self-Love:

My brothers, God has manifested to me the truth
of His love.
Now I am no longer principally concerned
with you or your needs, much less your words.
Had I listened to you I would be lost.
Had I not experienced it, I would never have
believed
that under the guise of the good and the
necessary
you led me to the brink of eternal death.
And so I will now do to you what you did to me.
I no longer have any human respect for you.
You are my mortal enemies,
and I will have no further dealings with you.
Like the damned, lose all hope.
I will make every effort to return to that life
from which I started out,
the one from which, through pretense, you had
me turn away.
With God's help I will no longer be deceived by
you.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

Still, I hope to act in such a way
that each will have what is due him.
As you made me do what I should not have done,
so I will have you do what you would rather not
do.

In this way, you may satisfy the spirit.
I hope to subject you completely to me—
that is, have you go against your natural bent.

On sensing that resolve in the Soul and realizing that the
Soul had indeed been illumined, the Body and Self-Love,
who could no longer deceive the Soul, were extremely
distressed.

We are subject to you
They said—

Be just and do with us what you will.
If we cannot get by any other way, we will steal;
that is, you will do all you can against us
and we will repay you in kind.
In the end, each will get his due.

The Soul answered:

Let me offer you a consoling truth.
Now you are sore distressed,
but once you free yourself of superfluous things,
then you will rejoice in everything I have said
and done.
You will share my good forever.
Be at peace, then, for in the end we shall enjoy
the peace of God.
I will not fail to provide, moreover, for your just
needs.
Keep in mind

CATHERINE OF GENOA

that I wish to lead you to the greatest joy in life.
Nothing has quite satisfied you altogether up to
now,
even after trying everything.
Now we may come together to a port of endless
joy.
The peace within you will grow slowly.
It will, though, eventually overflow from the
Soul into the Body;
and by itself, it would be enough to sweeten hell.
Before this fully comes about, however,
much will have to be done.
Let the help of God's light comfort you.
Now, no more words, but deeds.

The Body answered:

You seem so intense as you come toward me that
you frighten me.
You might commit some excess, make us both
suffer.
I will do what you wish,
but first let me remind you of one thing.
The precept following that of loving God, you
remember,
is that of loving our neighbor.
This love, in the temporal order,
begins with the love of your own body,
which you are to maintain alive and healthy
under pain of sin.
You should not, therefore, endanger life or
health.
Both are needed in order to come to what you
seek, your end.
Life, quite simply, is a necessity.

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE

When I, the Body, die,
you will have no means of adding to your glory,
nor any time for cleansing yourself from your
imperfections.

You will have to do that work in purgatory
—that is, suffer far more than you would in this
world.

Nor can you do without your health.

When the body is healthy, the powers of the Soul
are apt

to properly receive the light and inspiration of
God;

and above all when joy overflows into the body.

When the body is sick, these powers are wanting.

You see, then, what is good for both of us.

In this way, each receives what is due him,

and both come to the port of salvation

without censure from heaven or earth.

The Soul replied:

Now I clearly see what I must do,
prompted by God's light and the voice of reason.
It is, however, a higher reason that I will listen
to,

one that, hurting no one
and making it impossible for any to justly com-
plain,

may grant to each his just needs.

No one, indeed,

who has submitted his appetites to higher reason
will find fault with what I will do.

Let me do as I will, then,

for you will lead a life far happier than you can
possibly imagine.

CATHERINE OF GENOA

In the beginning,
when I wanted to attend to the needs of the
spirit,

I was in charge.

Through your deceit, you then bound yourself to
me

and we agreed to do good together,
to have neither lord it over the other.

Gradually, however, you turned me into your
slave.

Now I will once more be in charge.

If you wish to serve me, I will take care of all
your needs;

if not, I will still be mistress and be served.

If needs be, I will compel you to be my servant—
and that will put an end to all arguments.